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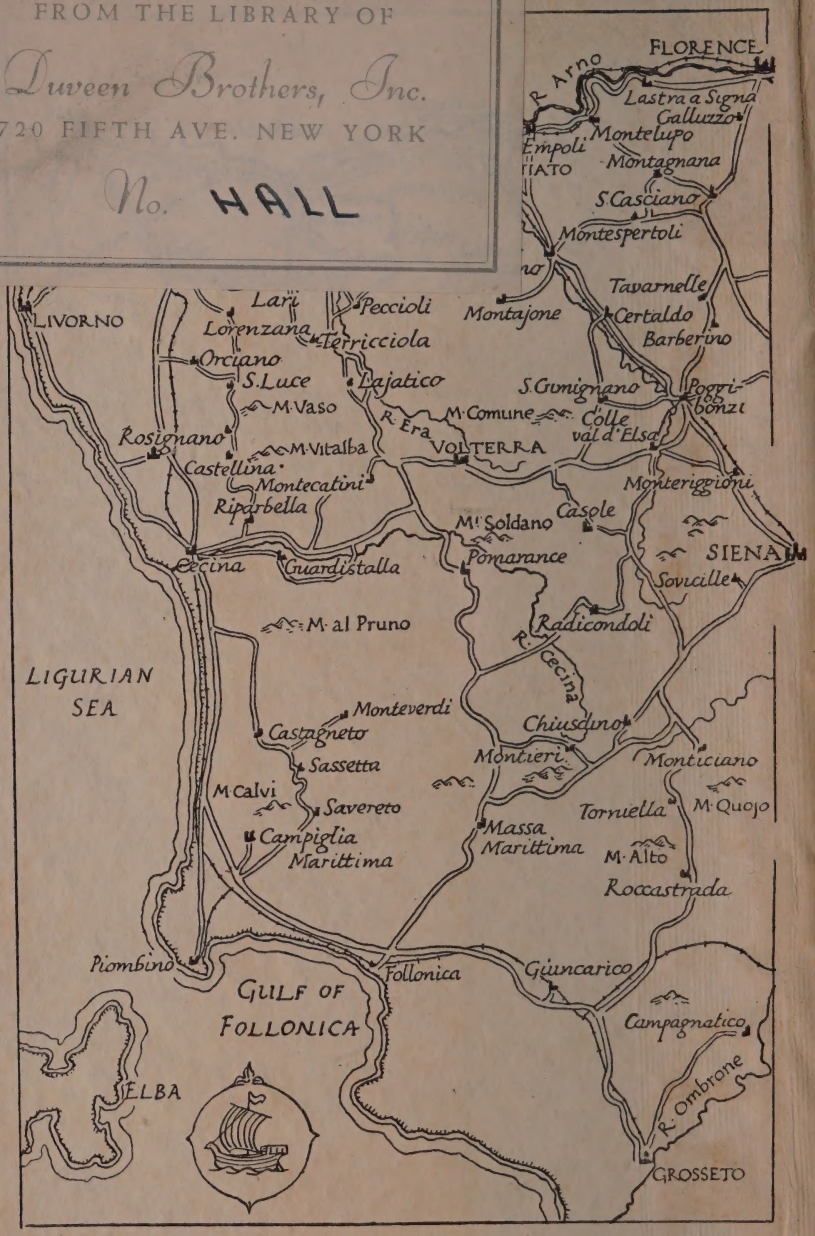

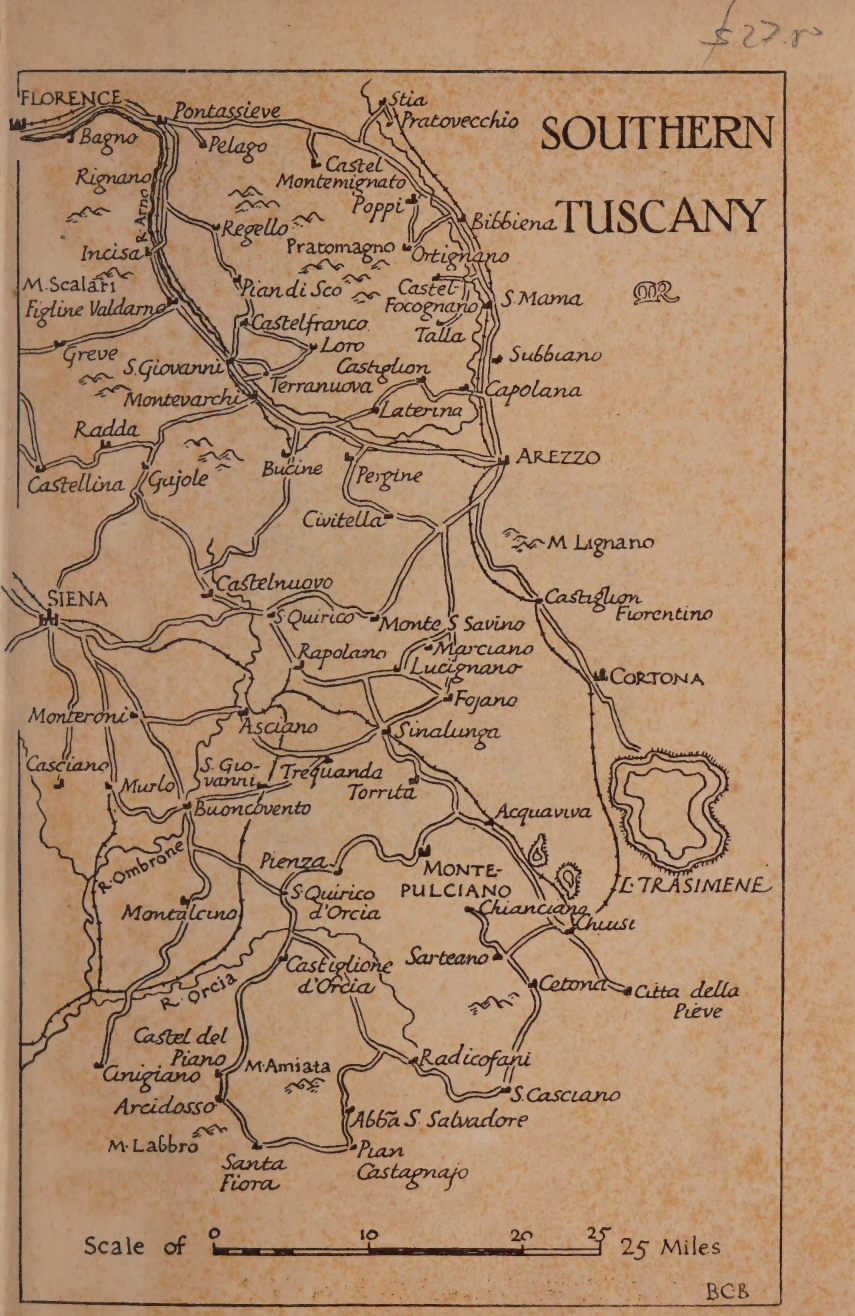

CHAS. IMPORT 385 W.

SIENA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FREDERIC UVEDALE: A ROMANCE
STUDIES IN THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS
ITALY AND THE ITALIANS
THE CITIES OF UMBRIA
THE CITIES OF SPAIN
SIGISMONDO MALATESTA
FLORENCE AND NORTHERN TUSCANY
IN UNKNOWN TUSCANY
COUNTRY WALKS ABOUT FLORENCE
ROME
GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

SIENA: THE DUOMO FROM FONTEBRANDA

SIENA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY

BY

EDWARD HUTTON

AUTHOR OF "THE CITIES OF UMBRIA," ETC.

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR BY

O. F. M. WARD

AND TWELVE OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

MY FRIEND

F. MASON PERKINS

PREFACE

IN any journey through Southern Tuscany the traveller, if he be wise, will set out from Empoli and use the old mediæval highway, Via Francigena, at least as far as Siena. If he come by train from Florence or the North it is at Empoli by the Val d' Elsa that he will enter this beautiful country; and, indeed, for all practical purposes the railway follows the road up the valley so far as the lovely city which on her triune hill seems to rule all this southern part of Tuscany, made up as it is of hill and vale and desert. The great highway, which, whether afoot or in the train, the traveller will thus follow to Siena is, as it were, the backbone of the Sanese. By it, and by it alone, whether from Rome or from the North, Europe, the life of Europe, passed into this great corner of Tuscany.

Unknown to the Romans, the Via Francigena, or Francesca, for it is known by either name, was, as its name implies, the way of the Franks into Italy, the one thing maybe that anywhere in the world was created by the Dark Ages, as we so rightly call that vast period of time in which the light of Rome seemed to be extinguished and Europe at the mercy of the Barbarians. But, as though to confirm us in our conviction that nothing which was then achieved was really independent of the Capitol, the Via Francigena was both at its beginning and its ending dependent on Roman work, for it begins as

a branch of the Via Aemilia and it ends at the gate of the Eternal City.

Leaving the Via Aemilia, the great highway of Cisalpine Gaul at Parma, it crossed the Apennines and entered Italy proper under Monte Bardone by the Cisa pass, descending into the western valleys at Pontremoli in the Lunigiana and entering what later became the Grand Duchy, what we call Tuscany, at Sarzana and forgotten Luni. Thence by the Salto della Cervia it entered the Lucchese, passed through the city of Lucca and by Altopascio and Galleno found Val d' Arno at Fucecchio. Crossing the Arno there below Empoli, under S. Miniato al Tedesco, it entered Val d' Elsa and, following that stream upwards, passed the cities that are our theme—Castel-Fiorentino, Certaldo, Poggibonsi. Climbing thence into the Sanese, it passed Staggia, and entering Siena by Porta Camollia, left it at Porta Romana, whence it crossed the tawny, uptossed, and sun-baked desert whose capital is Buonconvento. Climbing again, it reached the foot-hills at S. Quirico in Val d' Orcia, and entering the profound and barren gorge under Mont' Amiata on the east, took the Val di Paglia at the lost city of Callimala under Radicofani, passing thence as to-day to Acquapendente, Bolsena, Montefiascone, Viterbo, and Sutri, entering Rome at last by the Porta Castello in the shadow of Castel S. Angelo, close by S. Peter's Church.

By this road came Philip Augustus in 1191, by this road came the predatory Emperors. Nor, indeed, till our own day did the Via Francigena fall into disuse. By it our fathers came to Rome, so that in every old book of Italian travel, from Richard Lassells, writing in the seventeenth century, to W. D. Howells, writing in the middle of the nineteenth, it has a part. And though for no other cause, yet for this it shall be our road too; and though we shall often leave it, we shall always return to it, till at Radicofani, on the verge of the Patrimony, the last outpost of Siena in the South, we leave it for a new way home.

I must acknowledge help received from a host of people in writing this book, and my thanks are especially due to two among my friends, Mr. William Heywood and Mr. F. Mason Perkins, without whose sympathy and generosity this book would have been more imperfect than it is.

E. H.

July, 1910.

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SIENA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY

SIENA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY

I

CASTEL-FIORENTINO

CASTEL-FIORENTINO is, as you soon find if you are wise enough to be content to stay there, a busy and picturesque little country town, full of the life of the country, chaffering *contadini*, great, slowly moving oxen, and the happy laughter of children, which is the music of Tuscany. Originally set high on its fair hillside, it has run into the plain and mingled itself inextricably with its own *borgo*, that lies at the foot of the hill towards the railway and the sleepy Elsa. The whole place in its littleness and shadowy climbing ways is charming, and no one surely who has stayed there ever left the little inn in the lower town without regret.

But the lower town, in spite of its beautiful churches, S. Verdiana, S. Francesco, and S. Chiara over the water, gives you no idea of the delight and ancientness that await you in the Castello, the true Castel-Fiorentino, which climbs the hill, in the shadow of which the *borgo* lies, so precipitately.

The town gets its Florentine name, Repetti assures us, either from the fact that it was anciently under the civil and religious jurisdiction of the Bishops of Florence, or perhaps from the fact that it stood on the confines of the Florentine *contado*. But tradition, always the best guide, assures us that

it was given to the place by the people themselves out of a devotion very rare and strange for Florence, their mistress, and that in recognition of their love the Republic granted them her own arms, the crimson lily in a field of silver, which the town bears to this day.

However that may be, Castel-Fiorentino was certainly not the creation of the Republic of Florence. She was already old in 1164, when we first hear of her as one of the feuds of the Conti Alberti, confirmed to them by Frederic I. But feud of the Alberti though she was, it was not they who ruled her, but the Bishops of Florence, and in 1215 we find Bishop Giovanni da Velletri compelling his *terrazzani* to build their houses no higher than thirteen *braccia*, though the *borghigiani* of S. Lorenzo in Mugello were allowed to build houses of fifteen. This seems to have been a sore point with the Castel-Fiorentini seven hundred years ago. In 1231, however, they obtained a certain relief in this as in other matters from Bishop Ardingo, winning the right to elect their own dispensers of Justice, provided always that the Bishop approved their choice. In 1252 they seem to have elected their own Podestà. They chose Forese di Buonaccorso Adimari, a Florentine magnate, and no doubt this was a further blow to the jurisdiction of the Bishop.

But the history of Castel-Fiorentino, in spite of the position of the town in the Val d' Elsa, over the Via Francigena, is without real importance. Only twice, indeed, did it appear in any of those moving and dramatic scenes that are so plentiful in the story of the thirteenth century in Tuscany. The first of these occasions was by far the greater, and is a good example of the little town's devotion to Florence.

On 27 September, 1197, the Emperor Frederic I died, and his death, as we know, was the beginning of the ruin, total and complete, that a hundred and fifty years later finally overtook the Empire. It was a moment for bold action, and Florence was great enough to seize it. It was, however, the people of San Miniato al Tedesco, in Val d' Arno, who gave the signal. They destroyed the fortress held by the Germans

PALAZZO PRETORIO, CERTALDO

under which they lived, and not long after the walls of S. Genesio. This was the first act in the great movement that Florence now engineered for her own freedom and that of Tuscany. At this moment, so unfortunate for the Empire, she conceived and formed the Tuscan League, which was finally arranged at S. Genesio on 11 November, 1197, when the cities of Lucca, Siena, and S. Miniato, with the Bishop of Volterra, swore to maintain it. The treaty thus made bound the signatories to an alliance for their common defence against all enemies of the League as well as to make no peace with "any Emperor, or King, or Prince, or Duke, or Marquis" without the consent of the League, and to attack all cities, towns, counts, and bishops who refused to join the League when asked to do so. What did this treaty mean? Certainly the independence of Tuscany, its refusal to admit the claims of either Emperor or Pope. But it meant much more than that. It meant the consolidation of their *contadi* by the various cities, and the final ruin of the country nobility: for the *castelli*, the towns, and small domains were only to be admitted to the League as dependents of the legitimate owners of the territories in which they stood. From this there was but one exception, Poggibonsi, because she was claimed by many.

Two Rectors were appointed to govern the League, and, as it happens, they were solemnly sworn in at S. Ippolito di Castel-Fiorentino, the ancient *pieve*, now a mere chapel, about a mile from the Castello, on 4 December, 1197. The first of them was the Bishop of Volterra, and the other the Florentine Consul, Acerbo.

But, as we have seen, Castel-Fiorentino was a feud of the Conti Alberti, and they had not yet joined the League, neither had their feuds of Certaldo and Mangone or their fortress of Semifonte. Yet Castel-Fiorentino, the last of Florentine towns, far in the *contado*, was the meeting-place of the League. Was it she who brought the Conti Alberti low? We read that Arezzo joined the League in December, the Count Guido gave his word in February, 1198, and on the 7th of that same month Count Alberto also promised

allegiance, but in signing the treaty with him Florence expressly reserved the right to attack the fort of Semifonte, and to procure the submission of the Alberti feuds of Certaldo and Mangone, "even by force if required." Thus Castel-Fiorentino bore her part in one of the few beneficent revolutions that Tuscany has suffered.

The second incident in the history of Italy in which the little town figures befell in 1260, and must have been to her an occasion of weeping. For Florence, her friend, was brought low; the Ghibellines of Siena, with their German allies and the Florentine exiles, had "broken and put to rout" the "ancient Florentine people" at Montaperti, and Castel-Fiorentino was for a moment the meeting-place of the heads of the Ghibelline party.

In the fourteenth century Castel-Fiorentino figures somewhat more prominently. In 1312 she broke the contingent of Rupert of Flanders as it left the Emperor at Poggibonsi. In 1313 she was unsuccessfully besieged by Henry on his way to Siena,[1] and in various years, notably in 1359, she was hard put to it; but on the whole her history was more peaceable than might be expected, since she was on the great highway.

Happy Castel-Fiorentino! She was able and content to till her fields always as she does to-day, to tend her vineyards, to sow the corn under the olives, and to gather it in with songs, while the armies of Germany, the companies of adventure, the gay chivalry of France thundered by to destruction. Is not her story, which will never be told, one of those which should console us most in a world so busy about resounding trifles? She has no history; but in her untold story the romance of Europe lies hid—the story of men like ourselves going up and down day by day about their business, labouring in the fields in a hard partnership with Nature, chaffering in the market-place, rising at dawn, resting at midday, singing at evening, loving a little and weeping much—if we could but read it!

But if Castel-Fiorentino is without a history, if she never

[1] See note 1, p. 319.

produced a great man or a great artist, she is by no means devoid of the consolation of beauty. She herself is as charming and picturesque as can be; her churches are spacious and full of light, and there, too, you may find many a picture of a rare and exquisite country grace that only her lovers have discovered.

Now, of her churches S. Biagio, the old *pieve* in the Castello, has been chief since S. Ippolito, a mile away, fell into disuse. There, too, in the upper town is the Collegiata S. Lorenzo, while in the lower town is S. Francesco, now closed, though not, I hope, for ever; and best of all S. Verdiana, and across the river S. Chiara, once a convent of Poor Clares, but now in the hands of the Osservanti.

On the morning of the day after I had the happiness to return to Italy—and it was a fine morning too—finding myself, as I have told, in Castel-Fiorentino, loving her already for her happiness, I set out to see what was to be seen, and the first thing I came upon was the church of S. Francesco, closed and dumb. And they told me the Government had closed it as no longer safe, and with truly surprising generosity had made a magnificent grant of one hundred and sixty *lire*—say six pounds and eight shillings—for its repair! This I learned chiefly from an old *contadina* who lived in the disused convent, and presently when we were friends she let me into the church.

Now, S. Francesco, as I knew, had originally been founded by the conventuals of the Order who established themselves here in 1230. It is a fine church of a single nave, but neglect has allowed it to fall into a condition of disrepair that is really dangerous. In the choir I found Giottesque frescoes of the life of S. Francis as at S. Croce in Florence, and opposite to them a Crucifixion of S. Peter as in the Roman altarpiece attributed to Giotto, and as at Assisi.

In the nave are further spoiled wonders. To the right of the west door is a damaged fresco of the SS. Trinità. On the right wall is S. Francis enthroned with the three virtues—Poverty, Obedience, and Chastity—and four angels, two of

whom bear the insignia of the Passion. These lovely fragments, and they are very lovely, are by Cenno di Ser Francesco Cenni. Further, on the right, I found a fragment of a Madonna at Annunciation, and almost opposite to it on the left wall a fine head of S. Peter. Evidently the whole church was once covered with frescoes till the blindness of fools hid them under the whitewash, so that these fragments are all that we may yet see.

From S. Francesco I passed on to the beautiful and spacious church of S. Verdiana close by, standing over an early Christian chapel, now a crypt, dedicated to S. Antonio Abate. The great church was built long ago by the people of Castel-Fiorentino to their patron saint, S. Verdiana. Over the second altar to the left is a spoiled work by Granacci, a Madonna and Child with S. Sebastian and S. Francis. The church itself, indeed, holds very little that has any interest for us; but in the sacristies there are treasures. In the first is a spoiled Trecento picture of S. Verdiana between two snakes. In the second, beside a Botticelliesque Pietà and a Crucifixion by some pupil of Ghirlandajo, is one of the most astonishing eikons in Italy, a marvellous Madonna by Taddeo Gaddi himself, which in its monumental weight and power one can only compare with the famous Giotto of the Florence Academy.

I spent the morning in these two churches, and then in the afternoon crossed the river to S. Chiara, a charming and quiet convent founded in the thirteenth century by some Poor Clares from the Marca, to whom in 1278 the Contessa Beatrice di Capraja left a legacy of fifty lire. To-day, however, the convent is in the occupation of the Osservanti. It was one of them—"a friar of orders grey," who seemed, indeed, to have stepped out of the song, so jovial and fat was he—who, in answer to my call, came out of his siesta to show me the church. The church is delightful, filled with a country peace and scattered with sun and shade. Over an altar on the left I found one of those things I love best—a splendid Giottoesque Crucifix, into which the love and faith of the thirteenth

century seem immediately to have passed. Over an altar on the opposite wall stands a picture of the Madonna and Child with Saints, of the school of Vasari, a late sixteenth-century work full of mastery and all the later realism of painting, but curiously lacking in the assurance of peace.

Behind the high altar are two surprising figures of life-size carved in wood at the end of the fifteenth century and painted. They represent the Blessed Virgin Annunciate and S. Gabriel, archangel. To the delight of Fra Lorenzo, my guide, the arms of the Virgin moved, being flexibly jointed, as he showed me. But apart from this childishness, which he was so right to enjoy, the figures are fine of their kind; the Madonna, indeed, has the same rhythm as a French or English work in ivory of the thirteenth century.

The quiet beauty of the church, the eager chatter of Fra Lorenzo, caused me to linger here, and that was my good fortune. For just as I was about to leave, as I said farewell to Fra Lorenzo at the church door, a woman came towards us, and, greeting the friar, at once knelt down on the threshold, just under the lintel of the door, and prepared herself to be churched. With her came two ragged urchins and a little black dog. In the great shady nave the children played with the dog, quite at home in the house of their Father, while Fra Lorenzo, excusing himself, went into the sacristy and brought forth a great taper, which he placed in the good woman's hand, and a large book, all in Latin, out of which he proceeded to read some prayers. I cannot tell you what a charming and old-world picture this made, recalling happier days. The children in the shadow playing with the little black dog; the good woman who had just brought forth a child kneeling in the sunshine, holding her taper carefully, on the threshold of the church; Fra Lorenzo in his surplice, unctuous and sleek, reciting the Office—it was as though by some good fortune certain centuries had never happened, and we were back in those scarcely remembered days when everything could be accounted for, when there was still a unity in Europe, and we accepted the love of God and the offices of the Church

as matters of course. Only I seemed to be out of the picture. And so quietly I slipped away without so much as "Thank you" to Fra Lorenzo, to whom I owed this consoling glimpse of life in Tuscany.

It was late in the afternoon when I climbed into the upper town, the real Castel-Fiorentino, and found the Collegiata S. Lorenzo, a very old church, partly Lombard, where, over the second altar on the right, is a fine Ducciesque Madonna and Child, much darkened. The church has, too, some good late pictures, but I did not linger, as I wished to see the sunset from the Castello.

I found it when I came to the platform before the *pieve* of S. Biagio, where on the high altar is a fine early Madonna of surprising glory and tenderness.

Looking thence across the world in the most beautiful hour of the day, when in that level and golden light God seems still to bestow on the earth His benediction, I saw evening come from the mountains up Val d' Elsa. To the north the valley widened between the hills under Castelnuovo, at whose foot a little chapel, as I knew, hid some frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli. To the south the earth towered, breaking at last into the beauty that is S. Gimignano delle Belle Torri, where every little hill seemed to be crowned with a city shining in the setting sun.

It is surprising that a place so lovely should never have expressed itself, should have produced no one to tell the world, in words, colour, or action, in the beauty of his work or the strength, sweetness, or perfection of his life, of the loveliness of his home. It is true there are the children. Indeed, one of them, a lad of twelve or thereabouts, had come up as I stood there thinking, and now waited beside me, looking up into my face or across the valley to where the sun had hidden itself already behind a shoulder of the hills.

Presently I turned to him, and with a certain churlish impatience demanded, "Was there, then, no one born in this city who was ever famous?"

Now he answered, smiling up at me confidently, "Ma si, Signore."

"What!" said I, "there was? You tell me there was? And who is this unknown and yet splendid personage who stands for Castel-Fiorentino? Eh?"

And he answered, looking down, a little baffled by my sharpness, "Signore, Santa Verdiana."

"Santa Verdiana," said I. "Santa Verdiana? And who may she be?"

"Signore, she is a great Saint, our Saint, the Saint of Castel-Fiorentino."

"Ha ha," said I; "I remember now, boy; you mean the little Saint with the two snakes, the protector of the church down there?"

"Si, Signore."

"Was she of Castel-Fiorentino?"

"Si, Signore."

"Tell me, then." And I settled myself carefully on the wall, where I could see the glory of the sky, and prepared to listen.

"Signore, it was very long ago, if the Signore will believe me, when that holy one, Santa Verdiana of Castel-Fiorentino, had the politeness to be born here in this town for the glory of us who live here and the edification of all Val d' Elsa. Signore, it was very long ago, but, nevertheless, we shall never forget it any more than they of S. Gimignano will forget their S. Fina, about whom, as Padre Bonifazio says, there is too much talk. Will the Signore hear, then?"

I nodded.

"Signore, when Santa Verdiana was born here in Castel-Fiorentino her parents were very poor, yet in spite of this misfortune always she was good and holy, and the Saints talked with her. And so wise did she grow with hearing this talk that if the Signore will understand every one here loved her, and a relation of her family who was rich, noble, and very powerful, seeing how good she was, made her the padrona of his family, and gave his whole house into her keeping. This when she was not yet very old. Now, as it happened, Signore —and the Signore knows such things were common in those

days—while she governed the whole house of this rich man there was a famine in Val d' Elsa, and no one had enough, or even at last anything to eat. Only, as rich men do, being both wise and cunning—but cunning, Signore, at least here in Castel-Fiorentino—the padrone of S. Verdiana had known very well how to guard himself even in this, for he had in his house a great chest of beans laid by, and as such things grew more and more valuable, when they were worth their weight in gold he sold them to a certain merchant of his acquaintance, who, as the Signore may believe, having paid for them, was not slow in coming to fetch them. Signore, what do you think? Do you think that was a good bargain? Do you think that he filled his empty belly with those beans, and was able to sell the rest at a price of blood? If the Signore were to think so, he would be mistaken—but how mistaken! For S. Verdiana, Signore, that little poor one, had long since given all those beans away to the poor of Castel-Fiorentino, since they were hungry.

"Well, the Signore may believe me that when the padrone found that he had no beans to sell, and above all, when it occurred to him that the great price he had received must be given back, he was like a devil for rage. Signore, he bubbled over, he spat, tore his hair, and indeed behaved himself in a fashion unbecoming in one really well educated. But when S. Verdiana saw how things were, for a whole night she gave herself to prayers; and behold, in the morning, the chest was as full as ever. Such is the power of God, as the Signore knows. Then, when she found that her prayers were heard, she called the padrone and said, 'Leave off being angry; Gesù Cristo has returned the beans you grudged Him.' And that she said because you know, sir, it is written in the Gospel, 'Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'

"Now, when the padrone saw this thing and understood, you may believe he was astonished—astonished and proud, sir, that he should have so great a wonder in his house; and so, altogether reckless in his pride, he went through Castel-

Fiorentino telling every one of his good fortune, so that, to the great dismay and shame of Santa Verdiana, she found herself famous—an object, sir, of public veneration. In her great shame and fear of this which had befallen her, she made up her mind to flee away from Castel-Fiorentino, and to go on pilgrimage with some great ladies of this valley to S. Giacomo di Campostella, very far off, you know, sir, in the great kingdom of Spain. But we would only let her go when she promised at last to return as soon as she could. Now, of all that happened on that pilgrimage, as Padre Bonifazio says, we shall never know—no, sir, nor a half nor a quarter of it. But when she returned to this town, sir, we met her in a fine procession; and as she wished, we built her a little cell looking into the church—it was called S. Antonio then, sir—down there in the *borgo*, sir, now called Santa Verdiana. There, sir, as you may suppose, she heard Mass every day; but before the cell was finished she went on pilgrimage to Rome; but of what befell on that journey, too, we shall never know anything.

"When she returned, she entered the cell we had built, and there she lived, sir, for thirty-four years, till she came to die there—sleeping in summer on the ground, and in winter on a plank with just a block of wood for a pillow.

"Now, sir, in dealing with Saints you should always expect some wonder. So it was with Santa Verdiana. She had been in her cell perhaps four years, perhaps five, when, on the Feast of S. Antonio Abate, she heard the preacher describe what that patriarch of hermits endured from the presence of devils—devils, sir, who took the form of wild beasts—as you know, sir. So Santa Verdiana prayed that she might share the sufferings of that holy one, and it happened as she desired. For a few days after two magnificent and stupendous serpents came in at her little window, and there, sir, they remained for the rest of her life, eating out of her bowl, and lashing her with their tails when, sir, she had nothing to give them. Now, one day the Bishop of Florence, a very great and most important personage, came to Castel-Fiorentino especially to pay Santa Verdiana a visit, and seeing, as he peeped through

the window, the two serpents coiled up beside Santa Verdiana there in the cell, he immediately and hastily, without thinking twice about it, sir, gave orders that they should be killed. But when Santa Verdiana heard it she wept bitterly and begged him to allow her to keep them as an exercise of her patience. What could he do, sir, but grant her this petition? And, indeed, these two serpents remained with her for thirty years, till the people of Castel-Fiorentino killed them, to her great sorrow and regret.

"And not long after a most important thing befell her and this town, namely this, that San Francesco of Assisi came here, and finding her made her a member of his Third Order.[1] And Fra Bonifazio says that that was the best and most important event in her life, but I, sir, think the serpent best of all—don't you, sir? Then, sir, she died[2] in the odour of sanctity. That is all, sir. Would you like to see her, sir?"

I was silent for a time. And then I said, "I think I should very much like to see her."

So he led me a little way further over the hill, till we came to a church by the wayside called S. Pietro di Pisangoli, where there is a fine picture of the Madonna and Child by some pupil of Ghirlandajo. There we found a portrait of S. Verdiana in the grey habit of the Third Order of S. Francis with S. Jerome.

It was quite dark when I came back into the city; all the lamps were lighted, and in the streets there was a song. I think Castel-Fiorentino has perfectly expressed herself.

[1] This was in 1222. [2] She died in 1242.

II

CERTALDO

LONG before you come to Certaldo on its great hill over the narrowing valley of the Elsa, which in fact it holds and closes, the Castello shines before you, still very far off, a rugged cluster of houses and towers against the sky. When at last you find yourself on that great and beautiful road beside the river, at the foot of this beautiful hill, it is to discover a town very like Castel-Fiorentino in this at least, that the Castello, the walled and ancient town, is on the hill and the modern *borgo* in the plain. But, as you soon realise, Certaldo is more splendid, more rugged, and more ancient than her sister, though, as you see her from the north, you have the worst view of her, her true splendour looking southward.

Most of us who in the modern hurry stay here, perhaps, for a few hours on our way to Siena or to Florence, come not for any ancient loveliness she may have kept for us, but for Boccaccio's sake, for he died here in the ancient house of his family still to be seen in the Castello. But in fact Certaldo, with her picturesque mediæval ways, has much curious beauty of her own, a few pictures, some narrow and ancient streets, certain old houses and towers, the Palazzo Pubblico, the Casa di Boccaccio, and a delicious countryside, beside the venerated grave of that great and heroic man who has entranced the whole world with his stories, who gave Homer back to us, and was the first defender of Dante Alighieri, the devoted friend of Petrarch, the lover of Fiammetta; who remained poor his whole life long for the sake of learning, and who is indeed the most human

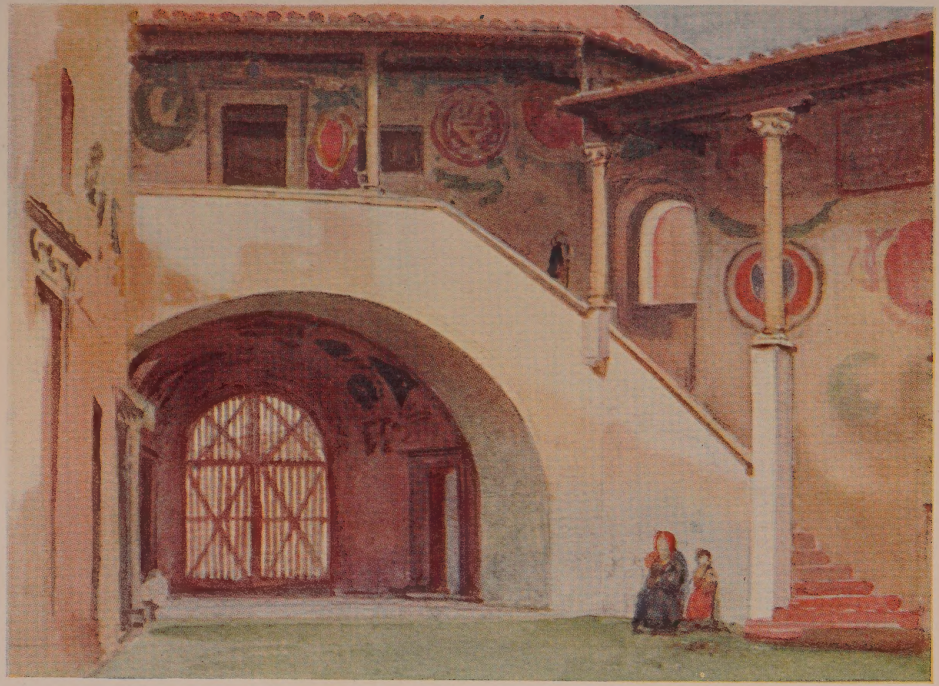
and the most modest and heroic spirit of the earliest Renaissance. There is nothing at all to see in the modern-built town, the *borgo* at the foot of the fruitful and beautiful hill on which Certaldo stands. In the great empty Piazza before the church of S. Andrea, founded on land left to the Augustinians of Florence by Jacopo, Boccaccio's half-brother, in accordance with his will stands a poor modern statue of Certaldo's greatest son and benefactor. It is in the lofty Castello that what remains to be seen in Certaldo is to be found.

If you turn to the left out of the Piazza you presently come to a steep way on the right called Costa degli Alberti, for Certaldo was one of the possessions of that great house. It is by this way you must pass, coming at last to the old and beautiful gate of the still walled Castello.

From the gate the main street mounts steeply on the left, past the old towered house of Boccaccio and the ancient church of SS. Jacopo and Filippo, to the Palazzo Pubblico, the great haggard fortress of the Alberti, carved with coats-of-arms and beautiful with a few frescoes.

Then returning a little on your way you come first, on the right, to the church of SS. Jacopo and Filippo, now the parish church of Certaldo, belonging to the Augustinians. Here in the single nave, on the left, is a large niche, perhaps for an altar, in which is a fresco of the Madonna and Child, with S. Peter, S. John, and S. Verdiana, by some pupil of Lippo Memmi. Our interest in the place, however, is chiefly roused by the fact that it once held the tomb of Boccaccio, and still preserves a memorial of him—a fine bust high up between the first and second altars on the right, with an ancient inscription beneath. Here, then, within the shelter of his parish church till a little over a hundred years ago Boccaccio lay in peace.

> "Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeathed
> His dust—and lies it not her great among,
> With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
> O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren tongue;



COURT OF PALAZZO PUBBLICO, CERTALDO

That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of speech? No—even his tomb
Uptorn must bear the hyæna bigots' wrong;
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for whom!"

The outrage which Byron refers to happened in 1783, when a new floor was built in SS. Jacopo and Filippo. The "hyæna bigots" of Certaldo, finding it disgraceful that the author of so many merry tales should rest in holy ground, tore up the tomb, scattered the ashes, and flung the stone aside. This unfortunate and disgraceful vandalism, exceptional in the annals of Italy, who has generally shown a touching devotion for the names of her great sons, was happily atoned for, in so far as was possible, by the principal person of the district, the Contessa Lenzioni, a daughter of the last branch of the house of Medici, ever famous for its generosity to and protection of artists and men of letters. This great and good lady rescued the tombstone of Boccaccio from the neglect in which it lay and found for it an honourable place in her own palace. She did more: the house in which Boccaccio had lived for many years, and in which he came at last to die, was as little respected as his tomb. This, too, she purchased, and devoted it to his memory. It stands a little lower down than and on the same side of the street as the church, and even contains a small Boccaccio museum. In a room upstairs, which the *custode* calls the studio of Boccaccio, are gathered a few of his relics, such as the stones of his broken tomb, a cabinet for MSS. said to have been his, and a curious sand clock. Here, too, are a few pictures. The house has a turret which commands an extensive view over the surrounding country, including as it does Montajone and S. Gimignano.

Here in the ancient house of his fathers Giovanni Boccaccio came to die in 1375. But Certaldo was not his birthplace, as has so often been stated; indeed he lived there, it seems, but little till the last years of his life.[1]

[1] For a fully documented biographical and critical study of Boccaccio, see my "Giovanni Boccaccio" (Lane, 1909).

Giovanni Boccaccio was born in Paris, as he told Petrarch, in 1313. He was the son of Boccaccio di Chellino da Certaldo, a young Italian banker and money-lender at that time in Paris, and a certain Jeanne or Gianna, a Frenchwoman about whom we know nothing save that it seems certain Boccaccino never married her. Their son, Giovanni, was probably brought to Italy when he was still a tiny child—at any rate his father was back in Tuscany, and in business in Florence, in 1318, where it seems Giovanni was brought up, *nel suo grembo*, as he says, in his father's house. Some have thought, among them the most learned student of his youth, Della Torre, that the hill on which he tells us his childhood was passed, "a little hill strewn with seashells and dark with oaks," was that on which Certaldo stands, and that it was here his boyhood was spent. It seems more likely, however, that since he tells us he lived in his father's house—*nel suo grembo*, literally, in his lap—that it was rather in Florence, where we know his father to have been, than in Certaldo he spent his earliest years, and this belief is strengthened by the fact that he later devoted a book to the description of the country about Florence between Fiesole and Settignano, which he greatly loved, while he says nothing of Certaldo, and also by the fact that we know his father had a house at Corbignano, under Settignano, that is still standing, which came to him as part of the dowry of his first wife, Margherita di Gian Donato de' Martoli, whom he married almost immediately after his return to Tuscany between 1314 and 1318, and who, if we understand Boccaccio aright, was the cause of the lad's sudden departure for Naples when, as we think, he was but ten years old. It had been his father's intention to bring Giovanni up to be a banker, but his early and passionate dislike of business brought this to nothing, and, no doubt to the delight of Margherita, his stepmother, whose son, Francesco, was then about two years old, old Boccaccio presently decided to apprentice Giovanni to a merchant in Naples, where, as we suppose, he arrived in December, 1323.

But if he disliked banking and money-lending, trade, we

may be sure, was not more to his mind. He longed to be a poet, and the gay life of Naples which he describes so vividly for us did not encourage him to stick to his desk.

His education had been of the most meagre sort, consisting of the mere rudiments of Latin and arithmetic. In Naples, however, possibly among the sons of the Florentine merchants there, he found a certain "Calmeta," who not only roused in him the desire for culture, but was able to guide his first steps in those *conversazioni astronomiche* of which he speaks so much. With him he pursued his study in Grammar, Dialectic and Rhetoric.

This new companionship was not, however, the only thing that helped to strengthen his dislike of business. In 1327 he was presented by his father, then on a visit to Naples as the representative of the great banking house of the Bardi, at the Court, and one thing aiding another, before his father left Naples he had told him he could not pursue his career, and in fact by 1329 we find him engaged—not much more enthusiastically, it must be admitted—in the study of Canon Law, for his father seems to have insisted on a fixed profession.

But whatever his duties may have been at this time, neither they nor his studies with Calmeta occupied all his time. He entered with gusto into the gay life of the gayest city in Italy. He speaks often of the beauty of the women in that splendour of earth and sky and sea, and the beautiful names of two he courted and loved, being in love with love, have come down to us, namely, Pampinea and Abrotonia, which we find in the "Filocolo." Like Romeo, Boccaccio had his Rosaline. These were not profound passions, of course, but they proved nevertheless to be an introduction to Love himself.

On entering Naples Boccaccio tells us he had had a vision of a beautiful lady who welcomed him with kisses. This vision was confirmed to him one night when, having deserted Abrotonia, and having in his turn been betrayed by Pampinea, they appeared to him in a dream, laughing at him, when he reproached them, and telling him it was in fact for another

lady he had made all the verses dedicated to them. And presently in his dream he saw this lady, led in by Abrotonia and Pampinea, fairer far than they, and, as in the first vision, dressed in green.

This vision, which seems to have befallen in 1329–30, proved to be a prophesy of Fiammetta. This lady, about the same age as himself, but already married, was the illegitimate daughter of King Robert of Naples and a lady of French birth, the wife of the Conte d' Aquino. Boccaccio saw her first on Holy Saturday in the church of S. Lorenzo of the Franciscans during Mass, and, as we may believe, on 30 March, 1331. He had gone to church, it seems, about ten o'clock, the fashionable hour of the day, rather to see the people than to attend the service, and there amid the throng he first caught sight of the woman who was so profoundly to influence his life and shape his work.

Fiammetta was tall and *slanciata*, and, as he tells us in a hundred different places, golden-haired and very beautiful. He watched her all through the service, and thought of nothing else for the rest of the day. Then on the morrow, which was Easter Day, he went again to S. Lorenzo in the hope of seeing her, and she was there indeed, dressed finely in a green dress loaded with pearls. And at once he recognized her for the lady of his visions.

That meeting was the beginning of a new life for Giovanni. Yet when he learned that Fiammetta was, though illegitimate, a princess, he can have had but slender hopes of winning her love. Nevertheless he did not altogether despair, and we presently find him in her company telling her stories out of the French romances then so popular, and of the Trojans and Romans. At her request he seems to have set about composing a romance for her, which he completed later under the name of the "Filocolo." He also wrote her many sonnets, hoping to win her, with all the *naïveté* of youth, by poetry. She allowed him to pay her court, and without giving him much encouragement no doubt enjoyed his homage. This courtship seems to have lasted some five years before an

opportunity occurred which gave Giovanni what he so eagerly desired—the full possession of this disdainful beauty.

This opportunity and the advantage he took of it is so characteristic of the time, and so like one of his own stories, that it must be told in some detail. But first let us assure ourselves that he loved her well and truly, if with a more human and mundane love than Dante had given Beatrice or Petrarch Laura; his was an earthly passion, sensual and unscrupulous, subject to the vicissitudes of life from which theirs were free. Petrarch had not the heart to possess himself of Laura; just that seems to have been the goal of Boccaccio's passion. His opportunity came during the absence of Fiammetta's husband in Capua. For long he had been her accepted lover, though so far she had always denied him the last proof of her love, which he now resolved to take by force or stratagem. Screwing his courage to the sticking-point, he bribed her maid to let him hide himself in her room. There behind the curtains of the great marital bed he watched her undress, and in fear and impatience waited till she was asleep. Then, as he tells us, trembling and scarce daring to breathe, he crept into the great bed beside her, in verity as though he were her newly wedded husband. Softly kissing her, sleeping still, and drawing aside the curtain that hid the light, he discovered to his amorous eyes "il delicato petto, e con desiderosa mano toccava le ritonde mammelle, baciandola molte volte"—and already held her in his arms, when she awoke.

She opened her mouth to cry for help, he closed it with kisses; she strove to get out of bed, but he held her firm, bidding her have no fear. She was defeated, of course, but that her yielding might not seem too easy she reproached him in a trembling voice—trembling with fear and hope—for the violence with which he had stolen what she had always denied him; adding that all was quite useless, as she did not wish it.

Then Giovanni, putting all to the proof, took a dagger from his belt, and, retiring to a corner of the bed, in a low and distressed voice said—we find the words in the "Ameto"

—"I do not come here, O lady, to despoil the chastity of thy bed, but as thy lover to cool my ardours, which either I shall achieve or I shall kill myself; for assuredly either I shall leave you satisfied or I shall die here at your feet. . . ."

To kill himself—there? O no, Giovanni! Certainly she did not want that. What, then? Well, not a dead man in her room at any rate for all the world to talk about. . . .

She was paid in her own coin; her silence gave consent. O no, Giovanni!

That night was but the first of a long series we may believe. "O how he loved my room!" says Fiammetta in the book which bears her name; "and with what joy it saw him arrive. . . ."

But that year so full of wild joy soon passed away. With the dawn of 1338 Giovanni's troubles began: at first jealousy. And his fears prophesied truly—he was betrayed. Fiammetta, as he knew doubtless, was incapable of any stability in love, and he could never help looking at *altre donne*. He struggled against his fate, humiliated himself before her, heaped reproaches upon her and scorn, but it was useless; she was surrounded by admirers no more scrupulous than himself, and she, too, was in love with love.

But fate was not content, it seems, with this single blow. Till then he had wanted for nothing; he had had a home of his own, and had been able to go to Court as he pleased and to enter fully into the gay life of Naples. Now suddenly poverty stared him in the face. His father, from whom all that was stable and good in his life had proceeded, was ruined, and before long, widowed and childless, summoned him home.

It cannot have been with any great content that Giovanni obeyed that call in the early days of 1341, when he was nearly twenty-eight years old. It seemed to him, doubtless, that he was leaving everything that was worth having in Naples; but as it proved it was in Florence he was to find, if not love, at least the fulfilment of his ambitions.

There in the next few years he wrote and completed the works of his youth—the "Filocolo," the "Filostrato,"

the "Teseide," the "Ameto," the "Amorosa Visione," the "Fiammetta," and the "Ninfale Fiesolano," and somewhat in that sequence. Driven from Florence, it seems, by the revolution that disposed of the Duke of Athens, he seems to have returned to Naples, perhaps to look for Fiammetta, but only to find the city in the uproar that followed the murder of Andrew of Hungary, husband of Queen Giovanna. Thence he wandered into the Romagna, staying with Ostasio da Polenta at Ravenna, where he met Dante's daughter Beatrice, and at Forlì with Francesco Ordelaffi. He may well have been there or in Naples, certainly he was not in Florence, when the plague descended upon Italy with such awful consequences in 1348. In that "black death" Fiammetta seems to have perished; we do not know whether it was Boccaccio who closed her eyes. Within the next two years he lost his father and his second stepmother, his father's second wife, and was left as guardian of his half-brother by this lady, Jacopo.

He returned to Florence in 1350, to find Petrarch there on his way to Rome for the Jubilee, and this, his first meeting with the most famous man of his time, was to be full of good fortune for him.

In 1349 the Republic of Florence had founded a university, really with the intention of attracting strangers to herself, for she was half-depopulated by the plague. In 1351 Boccaccio was sent as ambassador to Padua to persuade Petrarch, whose father was a Florentine exile, to accept a chair in the university. Though he did not succeed in his mission, he cemented his friendship with the lover of Laura, and was evidently considered by the Republic as a good representative, for we find him serving as ambassador to Ludwig of Brandenburg, and three years later to Innocent VI in Avignon. About this time he finished the greatest of his works, the "Decameron." He was about forty years old then, and unmarried. Fiammetta was dead, and his relations with women had, it seems, always been casual. Yet for Boccaccio, more than for any other man of his time, perhaps, love, with its extraordinary bracing of the

intellect as well as of the body, was, in some sort, a necessity. And it seems that about this time, in his forty-first year, he found himself taken by a very beautiful woman, a widow, who pretended to encourage him, perhaps because of his fame, provoked his advances, allowed him to write to her, and then, laughing at this middle-aged and obese lover, gave his letters to her young lover, who scattered them about Florence. In his exasperation he wrote the book called "Il Corbaccio," the most cynical of his works, little more, in fact, than a passionate attack on woman. His "troubled spirit," as Petrarch wrote him, had declared himself.

In the spring of 1359 he went to Milan to meet Petrarch, and while there probably met Leon Pilatus, the Calabrian who passed for a Greek. This charlatan and rogue he invited to Florence, in the hope of learning Greek from him. For two years he gave him hospitality, and succeeded, with his assistance, in producing a Latin version of the Iliad and Odyssey, which Petrarch was glad to borrow, and which, in fact, gave Homer back to the world.

During this labour a moral crisis, long threatened, of which the "Corbaccio" was a sign, overwhelmed him; in his fiftieth year he began to regret the irresponsibility of his past life. On the threshold of old age, poor and alone, he thought to love God with the same enthusiasm with which he had loved woman. He was not capable of it; his whole life rose up to deny him this impassioned consolation.

It was in the midst of this disease that a certain Gioacchino Ciani called upon him to warn him, as he intended to warn Petrarch, of the nearness of death. In doing this the monk—for he was a Carthusian—was but obeying the dying command of Beato Pietro Pietroni, a Sienese, who had seen on his death-bed "the present, the past, and the future."

Already drawn towards a new life—a life which under the direction of the Church he was told would be without the consolations of literature—at the sudden intervention, as it seemed, of Heaven, Boccaccio did the wisest thing of his whole life—he asked for the advice of Petrarch. The letter which Petrarch

wrote him takes its rank among the noblest of his works, and is indeed one of the most beautiful letters ever written. "You tell me," he says, "that this holy man had a vision of our Lord, and so was able to discern all truth—a great sight for mortal eyes to see. Great indeed, I agree with you, if genuine; but how often have we not known this tale of a vision made a cloak for an imposture! And having visited you this messenger proposed, I understand, to go to Naples, thence to Gaul and Britain, and so to me. Well, when he comes I will examine him closely; his looks, his demeanour, his behaviour under questioning, and so forth, shall help me to judge of his truthfulness. And the holy man on his death-bed saw us two and a few others to whom he had a secret message, which he charged this visitor of yours to give us; so, if I understand you rightly, runs the story. Well, the message to you is twofold: you have not long to live, and you must give up poetry. Hence your trouble, which I made my own while reading your letter, but which I put away from me on thinking it over, as you will do also. For if you will only give heed to me, or rather to your own natural good sense, you will see that you have been distressing yourself about a thing that should have pleased you. Now if this message is really from the Lord it must be pure truth. But is it from the Lord? or has its real author used the Lord's name to give weight to his own saying? . . . What is there new in all this? You knew, without his telling you, that you could not have a long space of life before you. . . . Forsake the Muses, says he. . . . Nay, I answer, when he bids you pluck sin from your heart he speaks well and prudently; but why forsake learning, in which you are no novice, but an expert, able to discern what to choose and what to refuse? . . . Though unlettered men have attained to holiness, no man was ever debarred from holiness by letters. . . .

"But if, in spite of all this, you persist in your intention, and if you must needs throw away not only your learning but the poor instruments of it, then I thank you for giving me the refusal of your books. I will buy your library if it must be

sold, for I would not that the books of so great a man should be dispersed abroad and hawked about by unworthy hands. I will buy it and unite it with my own; then some day this mood of yours will pass, some day you will come back to your old devotion. Then you shall make your home with me; you will find your books side by side with mine, which are equally yours. Thenceforth we shall share a common life and a common library, and when the survivor of us is dead the books shall go to some place where they will be kept together and dutifully tended, in perpetual memory of us who owned them."

That noble letter, so sane in its piety, in some sort cured Boccaccio. We hear no more of the fanatic monk, and the books were never bought by Petrarch, for they were never sold.

Boccaccio's days of creation were, however, over. He retired to Certaldo to the house of his ancestors, and there read without ceasing the works of antiquity, annotating as he read. His learning became prodigious, and little by little he gathered his notes into the volumes we know as "De Montibus, Sylvis, Lacubus," &c., a kind of dictionary of geography; the "De Casibus Virorum Illustrium," which deals with the vanity of human affairs from Adam to Petrarch; the "De Claris Mulieribus," which begins with Eve and comes down to Giovanna of Naples; and the "De Genealogiis Deorum Gentilium," a cyclopædia of learning concerning mythology and a defence of poetry and poets.

In addition to all his other reading Boccaccio had never ceased to study the "Divine Comedy," nor did he till his death. In 1365, however, and again in 1368, he went as Ambassador of Florence to the Pope in Avignon and in Rome, and apparently about this time, too, he published his Life of Dante. In 1367, leaving Certaldo in March, he went to Venice, where he had a joyful welcome from the daughter of Petrarch and her husband, but he did not again meet Petrarch himself. In 1370 he was once more in Naples, and in 1373 he was called from his retirement in Certaldo to

lecture publicly on the "Divine Comedy" in Florence. He began to read on 23 October, 1373, in the church of S. Stefano alla Badia, and continued on each succeeding day that was not a festival. He had got so far as the sixtieth *lezione*, when he was taken ill and had to cease. This was no sudden disease; he had never really recovered from his "conversion." Really ill, he retired to Certaldo, where, utterly miserable and suffering much from his disease, but more from the ignorance of doctors, he groped about far from Petrarch, looking for some certainty. He had thought he might find it in the monastic life, and it was in a solitude almost as profound that he came to die at last on this hill in Val d' Elsa in the house of his ancestors—a magician, as was said, like Virgil or Ovid to the folk of Naples and Sulmona, knowing all the secrets of nature. He must often have passed slowly, because of failing health, up and down the picturesque streets of the old town which holds as many sudden peeps as Assisi; and at sunset, perhaps, he lingered by the gates as we do, for they are wonderfully placed for beauty. From his room he looked over a world as fair as any in Tuscany—a land of hills about a quiet valley where the olives are tossed to silver in the wind and the grapes are kissed by the sun into gold and purple, where the corn whispers between the vines; till for him, too, at last the grasshopper became a burden.

There, on 21 December, 1375, he died, and was buried, as he had desired, above the quiet waters of the Elsa which puts all to sleep. In passing through the old streets of Certaldo to-day, it is part of our heritage to remember him.

III

S. GIMIGNANO

CERTALDO, for all its narrow, winding ways and smiling country, holds little to-day that we can be sure Boccaccio saw. If we would know what a Tuscan hill town was like in the fourteenth century, we must go on foot or by carriage to S. Gimignano delle belle Torri, on the hills on the other side of the Elsa. There, it is true, we shall find no remembrance of Boccaccio, but we shall be treading in the footsteps of Dante, and we shall find there, too, the memory of one of those little saints who once made sweet our world, but who, alas! come no more down the long valleys at evening, singing of the love of God. Nevertheless there are few refuges in all Tuscany more secure from the rampant and sentimental materialism of our time than S. Gimignano.

To reach this wonder, to behold this banner of a lost cause, still valiant upon the hills, that is a good way which leaves Certaldo by crossing the river, and so climbs over the hills till the city "of the beautiful towers" rises before you like a vision, and you come at last, as to a forgotten shrine, into her quiet and shadowy gates. That is a good way, but it is not the only one, or even the most frequented. For those who seek her out from Siena will approach her from Poggibonsi, whence it is a drive of some seven *chilometri* at a cost of six *lire* to this strangely towered city, so gaunt upon the hills, above the olives and the vines.

The road from Certaldo, which was the way I took, is as lovely as any in the world. You climb hill after hill between

SAN GIMIGNANO

the olives and the vines, where the grain and the grapes grow together. Often you descend into delicious valleys where the vineyards are still with summer, and the silence is only broken by the far-away voice of some peasant singing *stornelli*; often, too, you look back on Val d' Elsa, where Certaldo smiles on its steep hill over the river, till suddenly at a turning of the way S. Gimignano rises before you on a lonely hill-top, covered with the silver of the olives, the gold of the corn, the green mantle of the vines, like a city out of a missal, crowned with her trophy of thirteen towers. Over all that gay landscape, that quiet country-side, she alone still hovers like a sombre thought of the Middle Age; it is as though on that gay road some terrible verse of Dante had come to you suddenly on the wind, in the sunshine, at a turning of the way, and had changed the whole world for you in an instant.

Yet it is not anything too sombre or even too grave that fills your heart as you enter her gates, those gates that she threatens to destroy;—yes, for your sake, lest your motor-car should be compelled to wait drearily without and you yourself pass through her streets on foot. If Dante has trodden her ways she has surely forgotten it, and one is not surprised that the inscription in the Palazzo Pubblico, by which she has thought to remind herself of the honour, records the wrong date. For in spite of old age, in spite of poverty, in spite of the modern world that she seeks, with too much condescension, one thinks, to placate, S. Gimignano is a joyful city; a city of old, gaunt towers, it is true, but also a city of singing voices, which, as it seems to me, these towers hear gladly: they do not frown, but rejoice in the sun. For, ancient as she is, she who has seen the armies of Charlemagne and the end of the Empire, in whose ears the stories of Boccaccio followed fast on the anathemas of Dante, can afford to greet you even to-day with a smile, it may be of welcome, it may be of tolerance.

She is very old. More than a thousand years, according to Luigi Pecori, her historian, have passed since she was founded in honour of S. Geminianus. Certainly so early as the eighth century there was a town here, crouched under a

fortress castle, surrounded by the woods which gave her her second name, Castello di S. Gimignano, Castello della Selva. From that time, as we may suppose, and certainly in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, she was subject to the Bishop of Volterra, till in 1199 we find her electing as Podestà Maghinardo Malavolti of Siena, no doubt to stand for her against the Bishop. For, as before, the *rettori* of the Bishop of Volterra had administered justice within her gates, so after 1199 the Podestà ruled the courts and presided at the meetings of her Council and led her armies in battle.

For all the cities of Tuscany the thirteenth century was a century of war, nor was S. Gimignano an exception. Her position demanded it. Between Florence and Siena, she could not keep her independence and be at peace. When she had won her freedom from Volterra and forced the *Signorotti* of her *contado* to enter her gates, there were always these to watch and ward. Nor did she escape the horror of faction and civil war any more than her neighbours. Ghibelline as she was in the time of Frederic II, there were Guelfs within her walls who only awaited an opportunity to seize the city. Their chance seemed to have come in 1246, when, finding the taxes on the churches a good excuse, they rose, led by Guido Ardinghelli, and destroyed the towers of the chief Ghibelline families, whose champions were the Salvucci. It was the feud between these two houses that at last brought S. Gimignano into captivity. All through the thirteenth century the city ran with the blood of the factions, and yet amid the uproar little S. Fina passed by, thinking only of the love of God.

But S. Gimignano was torn asunder. Now Guelf, now Ghibelline, she suffered everything and gained nothing from any one. In 1260 at Montaperti she was Guelf, and shared the defeat and rout of the Florentines. In 1269 she was Ghibelline, and went down with the Sienese before the Florentines at Colle. Thenceforth she followed the Guelf cause, in 1270 helping the Florentines to destroy the Rocca of Poggibonsi, still obstinately Ghibelline. There followed a

peace, or sort of peace at least, of thirty years, from 1270 to 1300.

It was then, on a May morning in the year 1300, that an embassy from the allied cities of the Guelf League came up the long roads to S. Gimignano, and when the gates were opened Dante Alighieri, just thirty-five years old, rode into the town with his company, with trumpeters gay with silver and gold, and heralds all in scarlet and silver. In the great hall of the new Palazzo del Comune he gave his message to the ancients of S. Gimignano: to wit, that a council was called of the League to elect a captain of Tuscany, and that S. Gimignano was invited to send deputies.

That herald announced, too, the fourteenth century. The Ghibellines were no more, in name at least. There remained the broken Guelf party, irremediably split into Bianchi and Neri. Again S. Gimignano followed Florence; she was Black, and went to the siege of Pistoia in 1305. She returned to look to her own affairs. In 1308 war broke out between herself and Volterra, and the whole country was laid waste, till the League, or at least Florence, Siena, and Lucca, intervened. She followed Florence and the League against Henry VII, who, being at Poggibonsi, still ineffectually Ghibelline, threatened to fling down her towers and walls, and actually burnt the *contado*. Then, in 1313, Henry died at Buonconvento.

It might seem that with the Ghibelline cause in utter ruin S. Gimignano would have been at peace. It was, however, in the years following 1315, when Uguccione broke the Florentines at Montecatini, that she began to make an end of herself. Folgore, her poet, that terrible Guelf, was, after all, but expressing the mood of his time when he refused to acknowledge God while the Ghibellines triumphed. It is written that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." It was so with S. Gimignano, it was so with Italy. As in Florence, so in this little mountain city the trouble began with an attempt at tyranny. Trebaldo Baroncetti, one of the Guelf leaders, tried to make himself lord. It is true he was disposed of, but the

factions would not be at peace. In 1332 the exiles, under the Ardinghelli, ravaged and burnt the *contado*, till the people of S. Gimignano rased Camporbiano, in the Florentine territory, which had sheltered them. Florence demanded an explanation, and when this was not forthcoming she fitted out an expedition and imposed a fine on the Commune. Then S. Gimignano asked for mercy. This was the beginning of the end. Where Florence had once had obedience she never brooked independence again. It was the Duke of Athens who first enslaved her, but she tore down his castle when Florence spued him out. But she was ever at the mercy of her own factions, without whom the Ardinghelli, who would not give up hope of possessing her, would have been helpless. The end came with the plague in 1348. In debt to Florence, half depopulated, but still quarrelling, in 1349 she gave the government into the hands of Florence for three years. Even this did not sober her. In 1352 the Ardinghelli and the Salvucci set the whole city in uproar, and a year later Florence finally and for ever took over the government. Thus died the Commune of S. Gimignano, because she would not be at peace.

It is wonderful to remember that to-day, in the silence of the Piazza del Duomo or on the broken ramparts of the deserted walls. This at least one is tempted to claim, this at least we have won from time, in this at least to-day is better than yesterday —we have attained to peace. Yes, it is true here in Italy they have attained to peace, but in such a place as S. Gimignano it is the peace of death. Is it very much else, I wonder, in Siena, in Assisi, in Pisa, even in Florence, which once boasted so loud and would have destroyed one another, but at the same time formed our Europe, conserved our Faith, created our civilization, and gave us nearly all that is worth having in the world? Are there any better painters in the world than those of Florence and Siena? Are there any better poems than the "Divine Comedy," or better stories than those in the "Decameron"? And if you ask for men and women whom shall we place beside S. Francis of Assisi, S. Catherine of Siena? Some wonder is gone out of the world. To-day all Europe is at

peace, but we can do nothing to compare with what these four little cities did in the intervals of trying to annihilate one another. Why? Some wonder is gone out of the world. Is it, can it be, our Faith?

That question occurs very often to the traveller as he passes through almost every city in Tuscany; it is insistent in Florence, in Siena, in Pisa, nor is it likely to be dumb even in S. Gimignano. This little valiant town, so lonely on the hills, was once the centre of a vigorous life, civil and religious, even intellectual and artistic. It produced and employed painters; a poet was born here, little S. Fina stood for it among the blessed in heaven. Now the place is less than nothing, a curiosity for strangers; it has no life of its own, and is incapable of producing anything but a few labourers for the fields. As you pass through its narrow ways and look on the monuments of the Middle Age and the Renaissance, you find everything deserted and a cruel poverty the only tyrant left. Some virtue is gone out of it. Why?

By whatever gate you may enter the city you will scarcely pause on your way through these silent streets full of shadows till you come into the Piazza del Podestà, where on a great platform, reached by a noble flight of steps, the Collegiata stands with the Palazzo del Comune beside it, and the ancient Palazzo del Podestà, and the Chigi and Rognosa towers opposite to it closing the square. The whole place is deserted. A few beggars, a lounger here and there, an old woman spinning at a door, a few children playing on the steps—these and the sun are all that life has left the Piazza of S. Gimignano which Dante trod as ambassador for the Florentine Republic. Only the past seems to remain here, magically embalmed for once by the indifference of men.

You enter the Palazzo del Comune beside the Collegiata. It is full of silence, your voice echoes in the narrow corridors, but no one answers. You come into the beautiful courtyard with its loggia and staircase: no one is there; and it is only after climbing that stairway and passing through many corridors that, quite by chance it seems, you find the ancient

guardian of the place, who, with a sort of incredulous eagerness, leads you through those silent chambers that seem never to have heard the voices of to-day.

Your guide leads you first into the Sala Dante, still used, you gather, by the Council of S. Gimignano, but nothing modern, you feel sure, could ever be at home there under the majestic and beautiful fresco of Lippo Memmi, and that still older frieze representing a hunt, divided by coats-of-arms, that surrounds the chamber on three sides.

That fresco of Memmi's, the Madonna and Child enthroned, surrounded by angels and saints, S. Antony Abbot, S. Fina, S. Gimignano, S. Agatha, S. John Baptist, S. Peter, S. Francis, and S. Nicholas, was the gift of Nello Tolomei, who kneels there before the Blessed Virgin. It was finished, as an inscription records, in 1317, but is no longer, as another inscription tells us, wholly Memmi's work, for in 1467 Benozzo Gozzoli restored it. This loveliness, perhaps the finest thing in S. Gimignano, though it be full of beauties, Dante never saw, for he was here, as we have seen, in the year 1300, seventeen years before Nello Tolomei, the Podestà, set Lippo Memmi to work. Dante's eyes have, however, looked upon the frieze painted in 1292, which, besides scenes of hunting and jousts, shows us Scolaio Ardinghelli settling a dispute between the Commune and the Church, which befell in 1290, when, on account of some taxes, the Bishop of Volterra placed the town under an interdict, and the people broke down the church door and forced a priest to say Mass whether he would or no. Nicholas IV appointed Bishop Scolaio Ardinghelli, it seems, to settle the quarrel, and he ordered this frieze from some Pisan painter, to celebrate the peace.

From the Sala di Dante your guide leads you upstairs into a set of rooms now devoted to the Pinacoteca, where among many ancient and some beautiful things are a Polyptych of the Blessed Virgin with Saints, and a picture of S. Gimignano with scenes from his life by Taddeo di Bartoli; a Madonna in Glory, painted in 1512 by Pintoricchio; two small panels with four scenes from the life of S. Fina, the golden-haired Saint of

S. Gimignano, by Lorenzo di Niccolò, and two *tondi*, representing the Annunciation, by Filippino Lippi. Here, too, are two Madonnas (*tondi*) by Mainardi, and a Madonna between two kneeling saints, painted in 1477 by Pier Francesco Fiorentino.

From the Palazzo del Comune to the Collegiata, which heard the harsh voice of Savonarola when Florence was happily still deaf to him, is but a step, and you pass from one silence to another. This rather sombre but beautiful church is a building of the eleventh century that the fourteenth century has modified and restored, and to which the fifteenth century, by the hand of Giuliano da Maiano, has added a choir and two chapels. The naves are the oldest part of the church, the walls being completely covered with Sienese frescoes of the fourteenth century, as so many churches must have been up and down Italy, yet this remains almost alone to tell us of what we have lost. On the left wall are the Old Testament scenes in three tiers, painted by Bartolo di Fredi in 1356; on the right are scenes from the New Testament, begun in 1380 by Barna of Siena, and finished by his pupil, Giovanni da Asciano. They win us by their simplicity, their quite naïve power of story-telling, and their charm of colour. Here was the Bible of the unlettered *contadini* and the townsmen of mediæval S. Gimignano; and about the west window the whole of the religious life is summed up, as it were, in Taddeo di Bartoli's Last Judgment, painted in 1393. This Faith, so simply rendered into pictures on the walls of the *pieve*, was, after all, the corner-stone of S. Gimignano in the days of S. Fina.

Beneath the fresco of the Last Judgment Benozzo Gozzoli in 1466 painted the Martyrdom of S. Sebastian, with our Lord and the Madonna appearing to him in the heavens. That fresco in some sort commemorates the plague of 1348, for an altar was at that time erected here to SS. Sebastian and Fabian, but more particularly the later pestilence of 1464, when the theologian of S. Gimignano, Domenico Strambi, an Augustinian, caused Benozzo to paint this picture, with its decorations, about those two fourteenth-century statues of

wood, excellent Sienese work, of the Blessed Virgin and S. Gabriel Archangel.

It is not here, however, but at the eastern end of the right aisle that we shall find the true shrine of S. Gimignano—the shrine of S. Fina. The chapel where the little saint lies is one of those added to the church by Giuliano da Maiano in the fifteenth century, one of the most charming works of the Renaissance. The shrine itself, the altar, and the reliefs, however, are the work of Giuliano's brother, Benedetto. They were finished in 1475. Above the altar, in a *mandorla* of cherubim attended by two angels, the Madonna sits enthroned with her little Son. Beneath, in the beautiful reredos, are reliefs of scenes in the life of S. Fina—her vision of S. Gregory, her death, and her appearance to an old woman. On either side of the tabernacle are two angels in niches, while two splendid winged angels kneel in prayer Upon the sarcophagus itself, splendidly carved, with naked Loves, we read:—

> "Virginis ossa latent tumulo quem suspicis, hospes
> Haec decus, exemplum, praesidiumque suis.
> Nomen Fina fuit; patria haec; miracula quaeris?
> Perlege quae paries vivaque signa docent."

Who was this S. Fina who was "the example, the guardian of her fellow-citizens," whose country was S. Gimignano, and whose miracles are set forth "on the wall and in the lifelike statues"?

Fina de' Ciardi was born in 1238 of a poor yet noble family of S. Gimignano. Till she was ten years old she was the delight of her father's house, bright as a ray of spring sunshine in the dark rooms there, beautiful as a flower fallen from the gardens of Paradise, happy as a little singing-bird at morning. But in 1248 she fell ill, one of the most dreadful diseases of the Middle Age attacked her, and, thinking she was the innocent victim of God's anger on that tremendous century, she chose to lie on a plank of hard oak, refused a bed, and for five years offered herself to God in expiation of

sins she could not name. Fearfully tormented by the devil, who appeared to her in his old form of a serpent, eight days before her death she was comforted by a vision of S. Gregory, who promised that on his feast day, 12 March, 1253, she should join him in Paradise. And it happened as he said. But when they would have buried her they found her body so terribly mangled by disease that already the worms devoured it; and when they would have lifted her from her plank they found that her flesh adhered to it, and that indeed her body had died before her soul had taken its departure. Scarcely had she gone, when the devils, fearing doubtless her advocacy in heaven, "filled the air with whirlwinds; but against them, moved by angel hands, the bells of S. Gimignano rang out in sweet confidence, so that the whirlwinds were calmed and the storm stilled. And when the people came to the house of S. Fina they found it full of the most sweet fragrance as of Paradise itself, and lo, the room where the holy body lay was filled with flowers"; and marvelling at this, they presently went their way.

They went their way, but they did not forget, and two hundred years later they built this shrine by the hands of Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano, and in 1477 employed Domenico Ghirlandajo, the Florentine, and his pupil Mainardi to paint on either side the chapel a great panel of her life, with saints and prophets between. There on the right we see her awaiting death, when S. Gregory appeared to her promising her Paradise; on the left we see her funeral, when, incapable of not doing good, she touched the hand of her old nurse, sick herself, and instantly she was whole. Without the angels ring the bells of S. Gimignano. S. Fina's body was brought to this chapel in October, 1488, when it was consecrated: that was after Ghirlandajo had finished his work, and the place was sweet and beautiful for her.

From the chapel of S. Fina we enter the choir, where hangs a splendid picture, by Pietro Pollaiuolo, of the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin, signed and dated 1483, one of the most splendid works of this rare master. Beside it hangs a charm-

ing but over-sweet picture of the Madonna and Child with angels and saints, by Benozzo Gozzoli, painted in 1466. And not far away is one of the better works of Tamagni—a Madonna and Child.

In the sacristy close by is a fine bust of Onofrio di Pietro, master of the works when Giuliano da Maiano built S. Fina's shrine. The ciborium of marble is from the hand of Benedetto. Here, too, is a Madonna and Child with saints, by Mainardi, the pupil of Ghirlandajo.

The baptistery opens out of the left aisle. Here is a fine fresco of the Annunciation by Mainardi, and an ancient font of Sienese work, made indeed by Giovanni Cecchi in 1379, at the expense of the Arte della Lana, whose arms it bears.

Leaving the old church at last with its fading frescoes and half-forsaken shrine, we pass on through the streets, scarcely less quiet and scarcely less ancient. Tower after tower comes into view over the roofs, and hides itself again ; palace after palace, that is called indifferently of the Salvucci, of the Ardinghelli. In the Piazza della Cisterna, for all its new name of Victor Emmanuel, the grass is growing ; the Torre Cinatti is crowned with wild flowers ; now and then, as down the Vicolo de' Becci, far-away views of the world, the sweet hill country of Tuscany, recall one for a moment from the strangely silent streets.

But wherever one wanders in S. Gimignano one always returns to the Piazza. One leaves it at last by the Via di S. Matteo intent on seeing the church of S. Agostino. Just before the gate one turns into a narrow street on the right that presently brings one to the church. Built in the end of the thirteenth century, S. Agostino is yet full of works of the fifteenth. At the west end is the little chapel of S. Bartolo, a saint who gave his life for others, and they lepers, at Cellole in the year 1300. His marble shrine, the lovely work of Benedetto da Maiano, is of the end of the fifteenth century. Above are the three theological virtues, they tell you—three panels representing the good works of the saint, and an exquisite relief of the Madonna and Child. All is enclosed

in a marble arch carved with arabesques. The three saints on the wall and the doctors on the ceiling are works of Mainardi.

Close by on the south wall of the nave is a lovely fresco of the Madonna and Child with saints, one of the best works of Pier Francesco Fiorentino. Above is a Pietà by Tamagni. We find Tamagni's work again over the next altar, where is a fresco of the Madonna and Child with angels, and SS. Nicholas, Roch, Paul the Hermit, and Anthony Abbot; and again, over the first altar on the north wall of the nave, where there is a cross beneath which kneels S. Chiara of Montefalco. Close by is a very fine fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli of S. Gimignano protecting the town against the plague. It is to see Benozzo Gozzoli's work in the choir that we are come to S. Agostino, but as we pass to it we may notice the fresco by Mainardi, at the end of this north wall, of S. Gimignano blessing the magistrates of the town. Under that fresco lies Domenico Strambi, the Augustinian to whom S. Gimignano owes so many of her treasures, for he was the patron of the Maiani and Pollaiuolo and Ghirlandajo, and it is to him we owe these frescoes of Benozzo also.

Begun in 1463 and finished in 1465, these paintings which fill the choir with their radiance are the worthy companions of those Benozzo painted at Montefalco which tell so sweetly the life of S. Francis. Here in S. Agostino it is the life of S. Augustine we see. On the left we find him leaving home for school, where later we see him punished. Then at the age of nineteen he enters the University of Carthage, where, as he himself has told us, he went too much in the way of the world till he found himself praying that so human prayer, "O God, make me chaste—but not yet." But from afar his mother remembered him, and was daily besieging Heaven on his behalf, so that at last he sets out across the sea for Italy, taught philosophy in Rome, and at length came to Milan, where S. Ambrose receives him. Him he hears, while S. Monica also recounts all her fears to the great archbishop. To Augustine, reading in a fair garden, comes S. Ambrose, and hearing him, Augustine is baptized; and there we find the first words

of the Te Deum Laudamus, that marvellous hymn of praise that S. Ambrose and he are said then to have composed in antiphon. Later he teaches, and in a vision sees a child pouring the sea into a hole. There follows S. Monica's death. Above in the lunettes we find his ordination, his refutation of the heretics and vision of S. Jerome, his death and entry into Paradise.

Above in the vault are the four Evangelists, on the choir arch figures of saints—S. Gimignano, S. Bartolo, S. Nicholas, and S. Nicholas of Tolentino, S. Catherine of Siena, S. Fina, S. Sebastian, and Tobit; and beneath these again are S. Bartolo washing the lepers' feet, an apparition of S. Nicholas of Tolentino, the martyrdom of S. Sebastian, and Tobit and the archangel.

These beautiful works, fading so surely on the walls of that old church, might well stand as symbols of S. Gimignano itself —it too is passing away, it too is a tale that is told. What, after all, have you to do with S. Augustine or S. Gimignano? This morning you left Florence maybe in a motor-car, this evening with many a friendly bellow you will sweep into Siena, and S. Gimignano will be to you just so much as a printed leaf in one of her own missals, just so much—a vision without reality. This must be the agony of the tourist, that he cannot realize anything that he sees. But fortunately some of us —and though we be few none the worse for that—having once seen S. Gimignano, will never forget her again. It is not what she possesses—her pictures and frescoes, and churches and towers—that calls us, though we love that well enough: it is herself we need. She is poor, and her ways are quiet: how hospitable is her inn! She has the inevitable humility of those who have given up the struggle for pre-eminence, the inevitable grace of all those who have learned how to wait in meditation. Indeed, I have not told one-half of her sweetness, nor numbered the half of her treasures, nor told of her country byways, nor altogether understood why I love her so. Yet this I know: she has nothing to do with machinery or the getting of wealth. Come and see.

IV

VOLTERRA

THE road for Volterra—for it was thither I was bound one fine October morning at dawn—descends from S. Gimignano into the valley, and climbing again through that quiet and delicate country that marks all the Val d' Elsa, joins the high road from Colle at Castel S. Gimignano—a village that is scarcely more than a ruined fortress. Thence the way lies over vast and barren watersheds, across an uplifted wilderness of sterile clay hills, past blue-grey chasms of volcanic *tufa*, till at evening "lordly Volaterrae" rears itself up suddenly against the sky, haggard with loneliness and age like the dreadful spirit of this strange country so full of a sinister desolation. No traveller can, I think, approach this outraged stronghold of old time without a certain hesitation, a certain apprehension and anxiety. The way is difficult, precipitous, and threatening, full of dangers that cannot be named or realized; and long ere you climb the last great hill into the city an eerie dread has seized your heart. As far as the eye can reach that barren and tortured world rolls away in billow after billow of grey earth scantily covered with a thin dead herbage that seems to have been burned with fire. On either side the way vast cliffs rise over immense crevasses seamed and tortured into the shapes of raped and ruined cities: yonder a dreadful tower set with broken turrets totters on the edge of sheer nothing; here a tremendous gate leads into darkness, there a breached wall yawns over an abyss. If there be such a thing as traveller's fear, it is

here you will meet it, it is here it will make your heart a prize. As for me, I was horribly afraid, nor would any prayer I knew bring my soul back into my keeping.

And if the way is so full of fear, what of that lofty city that stands at the high summit of this narrow road winding between the precipices? It too is a city of dread—a city of bitterness, outraged and very old. Seven hundred years before the fall of Troy it had already suffered siege. Surrounded in those days by walls 40 feet high, 12 feet thick, and 8,000 yards in circumference, that have worn out three civilizations, and still in part remain, Volterra was one of the greater cities of the Etruscan League. Like vast fortresses her gates were held impregnable. Enemy after enemy, army after army broke against those tremendous bastions; she scattered them, and they were lost in the desolation in which she is still entrenched. From the lower valley of the Arno to the forgotten citadel of "sea-girt Populonia," which the Maremma has destroyed, she reigned supreme. She threatened Tarquinius Priscus, king of Rome; to her Scipio Africanus turned in his need when he would have broken Carthage in 205 B.C., and she lent him sea-power, for she held the ports of the north, Luna and Pisa, as well as Populonia at the doors of Latium. Her sovereignty stretches over more than two thousand years, nor is there any record of her subjugation till Sulla, after a siege of two years, held her at the mercy of the City. Who knows what were her thoughts when that Rome whose birth she had seen, whose power she had known how to resist for so many ages, fell at last into the darkness? That her lordship grew in the time of the Lombards, that in the 450 years of the refounded Empire she still lived, though as its fief, her records prove. Then at the end of the Middle Age, as old as her own bitter hills, she rose again on the verge of the new-made desert, desolate but free. It was her last brief resurrection. Little by little life forsook her, never to return. Nature had tired her out. Above the silent Maremma, full of miasma and death, that had already swallowed up Populonia and many another city populous and

strong, Volterra withered away. It was into a dead city that the Florentines marched when in 1361 they claimed to have subdued her.

The traveller who, forsaking the valley or the sea-coast in order to see Volterra, has had patience or perseverance great enough to cross the solitude that surrounds her, might, in fact, have spared himself his journey: he will not see Volterra; what he will see is a vast and gaunt ruin, the mighty débris of what was once a city.

Approaching her, as he must do, through an appalling desolation, he is in some sort prepared for those incredible ruins that await him: a vast wall thousands of years old that nothing but time or earthquake could have destroyed, a tunnelled gate like a primeval fortress, like the port of Thebes —massive stone set on massive stone without mortar or cement—

> "Piled by the hands of giants
> For god-like kings of old."

Encamped within these ruins he will find the débris of more than one later civilization—Roman, Mediæval, and Renaissance—cheek by jowl with the fugitive and impermanent work of to-day. Still enclosed and guarded by the wall of the Etruscans, and entered by their gate, the shrunken mediæval city of Volterra waits for him amid the ruins of four different ages, like some wild herb hidden in a crevice of the temples of Karnak.

Little by little as one wanders through those silent streets, those quiet piazzas where to-day and yesterday have met here in the oldest graveyard of all in an unlooked-for reconciliation, this at least seems certain, this at last is realized, that all things pass away and nothing remaineth. Nothing you might think could have overthrown so tremendous a citadel, yet man has consumed it, and Rome has passed by here and left so little that the farthest of her provinces more easily remembers her. Nor is it only antiquity that is here in ruin. Be sure time has not done with her, and you may see the mediæval abbey

as desolate as the Etruscan wall. For Volterra is set on the edge of the mountains; she clings, and dizzily, to her rock over the abyss; little by little she is slipping, falling, dropping stone by stone, church by church, flower by flower, into nothingness, into that vast desolation that surrounds her. You may see it through every arch, it haunts every byway of the town, it greets you from Porta Menseri, from Porta S. Francesco, from Porta S. Felice, and though Porta di Docciola is hung with earth's loveliest garland, and the girls sing there at the fountain, it too brings you to the brink, it too stares into open nothingness. Death—yes, if you would look upon it and know how it lurks behind everything fair, noble, or venerable, you have but to walk out of Porta Pisana for a short mile, and there, beyond a more ancient gate, you look into the horrible depths of the very pit where is hidden all that was once so strong. There, down there, Volterra, what is left of Volterra, will lie soon, for she is very old, and her earth is weary of the burden of her ruins.

You might think that a visit to such a tragic place in search of beauty, in search of works of art, would certainly resolve itself into a quiet pottering among the stones; and that whatever you might bring to light would be, could, in fact, be, nothing but the merest fragments. I don't know. What is all our "sightseeing" then, our artistic enthusiasm, here in Italy at any rate, but a patient search among the ruins for the beauties of an alien age? Indeed, in most places even the search is spared us, and we by so much the poorer. At least here in Volterra we may go quietly and alone from ruin to ruin, from church to church, from piazza to piazza, without too vulgar or noisy a curiosity. There is much to see—and let us be thankful for it—that can never be labelled or imprisoned in a museum; there is much even that cannot be uttered, that the heart must divine.

One at least of the dread problems of ancient Volterra is brought very clearly before us by that great Piscina within the Porta all' Arco, itself perhaps the most wonderful thing in the city, between it and the Fortezza, which it is so difficult

VOLTERRA : PORTA ALL' ARCO

to get permission to see. It is a great well, or reservoir, without which no city, howsoever strong her walls, could avoid surrender. It was the failure to obtain plentiful water that always troubled Siena, and Volterra had provided herself with it in a situation even more difficult centuries before Siena was anything but a negligible stronghold of the hills. Whether that great cistern is the work of the Etruscans, repaired and perhaps enlarged by the Romans, or whether it is a contrivance of Rome, is difficult to decide. The tremendous work of the Etruscans, however, is not far off, and before attempting to explore the city itself every traveller should pass out of the Porta all' Arco, and if he cannot make a complete circuit of the ancient walls, which were some five miles in circumference, he should at least pass westward to Porta S. Felice, still outside the mediæval city but within the Etruscan, continue his way to S. Chiara, and so to that horrible precipice, Le Balze, by S. Giusto, which is so surely swallowing Volterra itself. There can be little anywhere in the world to compare for antiquity with the spectacle offered by that brief walk. Thousands of years have gone to the making of it, and these works, so tremendous in their material features, are not less impressive in their spiritual significance, for they were probably standing when Troy fell, they were old when Romulus ploughed on the Palatine, they have heard the words of the augur and watched him divine the future in the face of the rising sun or the flight of a bird, they have heard Pan piping in the woods and seen him desolate upon the mountains, they have heard the wild chant of the Bacchante when the grapes were purple in the waning summer, and watched the priest make Christ out of bread and wine in the early morning when our voices were hushed for fear and the worshippers were few. They are part of the bulwarks of Europe; we built them when we were young and believed in the future, therefore we piled one stone upon another that it should never be removed, and our faith was justified in our work; it is the earth that has grown weary of the weight we set upon it and, subsiding into that abyss, Le

Balze has brought down what nothing save earthquake has been strong enough to destroy.

What those who built these walls believed, what they thought concerning life and death and the world in which they dwelt, we may discover, though but dimly, in the splendid museum of the Palazzo Tagassi, the Museo Guarnacci. There in some fourteen rooms is arranged a collection of some six hundred cinerary urns dating from the second or third century B.C., the latest period of Etruscan art. The execution of the reliefs carved upon them is feeble and even rudimentary, but the subjects are clear enough. Then, too, we were sorry to say farewell, and set forth on that long last journey with as good a heart as might be; we sacrificed to the gods, followed our brothers to the grave, and were glad at evening. That the men who carved these caskets for the ashes of their fellows were Europeans their work testifies, but indeed we know little more about them; we cannot read their language nor decipher their inscriptions. Only such funereal signs as these we have and may understand, for they speak that universal tongue which proclaims still our brotherhood.

There is but little in Volterra to-day that bears witness to the Roman occupation that befell after Sulla's two years' siege: the Piscina perhaps, the inner façade of the Porta all' Arco, scarcely anything beside. But what Volterra owes to Rome, what we all owe to the most stable rule Europe has ever known, is the establishment of the Catholic religion, and Volterra is not poor in Christian monuments. There is nothing here, of course, that can be claimed as due to the Empire, and in the tenth century Volterra, like the rest of Christendom, had fallen into decay; she owes her resurrection as a small encampment, as it were, within her vast old walls to the Holy Empire, to the Ottos. To this period nothing now remaining within the city strictly belongs, unless, indeed, it be certain arches or parts of arches, towers and gates, but the ruined Badia beyond S. Giusto, the ruined church of Santo Stefano outside the Porta S. Francesco, and the abbey of S. Salvatore, are Romanesque buildings of the eleventh century.

Within the city the oldest building is the Duomo, which was consecrated in 1120 by Pope Calixtus II, and which was restored and enlarged by some builder of the Pisan school, certain authorities say by Niccolò himself, in 1254. Though it was spoiled in the sixteenth century by the restorations and works of Ricciarelli, a nephew of Daniele da Volterra, the Duomo is still interesting, its façade being wholly of thirteenth-century work, save the doorway of black and white marble, which seems to be later. Within, the church is a spacious Latin cross, and it holds several works of art which are worth more than a passing glance.

The most ancient of these is the beautiful pulpit, a splendid work of the Pisan school, consisting of a four-sided rostrum, supported by four granite pillars standing on the backs of crouching lions. Each side of the rostrum is filled with a fine relief of the early thirteenth century, that in front showing us the Last Supper, with Judas crouched at the feet of Christ, who gives him the sop, while behind him lurks that old dragon, the ancient enemy of God and man; at the sides are the Salutation and the Annunciation, and at the back the Sacrifice of Isaac. To the right and left of the western doors we find some further reliefs, fourteenth-century works of much charm, representing the Life of SS. Regolo and Ottaviano. These tender and lovely things deserve more attention than they are ever likely to get. But the Duomo is rich in sculpture. On either side the high altar, on two exquisite twisted columns, two angels by Mino da Fiesole kneel. It is to Raffaele Cioli, a sixteenth-century master, we owe the beautiful sarcophagus with attendant angels where S. Ottaviano sleeps.

And then, if the Duomo is rich in marbles, it has some astonishing works, too, both in terra-cotta and in wood. Perhaps the finest of these is the bust of Pope S. Linus, the immediate successor of S. Peter, made by Andrea della Robbia, but the S. Sebastian, a work of his school, is not to be passed over, and the Presepio group, with a fresco by Gozzoli for background, and the Adoration of the Magi, are

two of the finest works of their kind in Tuscany. In wood—and wooden statues and groups are always rare and always valuable and expressive—we find here in the Duomo a fine Deposition. But all the woodwork—the choir stalls, the splendid work in the sacristy especially—and the fine metal reliquaries of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, a crucifix of silver, and such, should be carefully examined. They are part of the unspoiled charm of Volterra—a charm rarely to be met with in the more accessible cities of Tuscany, where everything lovely or curious has been stolen from the church and exhibited in the museums.

Of pictures the Duomo of Volterra can make no boast. Those she has are charming but of little real importance or beauty. The polyptych, painted in 1411 by Taddeo di Bartolo, which used to adorn the Oratorio di S. Carlo, is now in the Museum, as is the Annunciation which Luca Signorelli painted in 1491, and the Nativity of Benvenuto di Giovanni; there remains a small triptych with an Annunciation, the Madonna and Child, and the Crucifixion within, and without S. Peter and S. Paul, and a picture of the Annunciation by Albertinelli.

The baptistery, an octagonal building of the thirteenth century, stands opposite the cathedral. The beautiful arch over the high altar is the sixteenth-century work of Balsimelli da Settignano, while the font, octagonal too, like the building in which it stands, is the work of Andrea Sansovino. The splendid tabernacle of marble, about which angels kneel in adoration, is the beautiful work of Mino da Fiesole.

These two buildings, fine and rich as they are, by no means stand alone in Volterra. Every church, and there are many, is full of interest. There is S. Lino, for instance, built in the fifteenth century, which contains the fine tomb of the scholar Raffaele Maffei, with a recumbent statue by Silvio da Fiesole. There is S. Francesco, a thirteenth-century church rebuilt in 1623, which possesses a fine relief of the Assumption by a pupil of Andrea della Robbia, and out of which one passes into a little chapel of the Holy Cross, built in 1315, in almost

perfect preservation and covered with frescoes, for the most part by Cenni di Francesco. There on the walls one sees the Massacre of the Innocents, the Invention of the Cross, and, indeed, all that wonderful story delightfully told as in S. Croce of Florence, but as it were in miniature. The whole chapel is still a fine example of what such a place as this was in the fifteenth century.

Again, in S. Pietro we find two of those wonderful wooden statues, an Annunciation, like those at Castel-Fiorentino and S. Gimignano; and in S. Michele, over whose door is a Madonna and Child of the thirteenth century, is a fine Madonna and Child in a splendid niche, perhaps by Giovanni della Robbia.

It is pleasant on an afternoon, too, to stroll out of Porta a Selci, and in some half-mile to come to the convent of S. Girolamo, for it is full of beautiful things, and is itself, with its shady loggia, one of the most charming buildings about this harsh old city. There we find a great terra-cotta relief by Giovanni della Robbia of the Last Judgment, beneath which are three *predelle*—the Annunciation, the Nativity, and the Adoration of the Magi. There, too, are several of those delightful country pictures that so often delight us in Tuscany —Madonna and her little Son with S. Francis and five other saints, perhaps by Zanobi Machiavelli, and, better still, a wonderful golden Annunciation by Benvenuto di Giovanni, where Madonna sits, very tall, upright, and full of grace, girdled with Cherubim, while S. Gabriel Archangel, crowned with olive—and that was for the peace about to be proclaimed twixt earth and heaven—fallen on one knee, repeats his message, S. Raphael standing on one side thrusting at the dragon, S. Catherine on the other with her palm of martyrdom, and in the sky God the Father, in the midst of Cherubim and golden angels, sees that all is well and blesses our world. Beneath, the donor kneels praying to Madonna.

It is such a thing as that which makes all our trouble to reach Volterra, all our mournfulness within her walls, worth while.

But if, indeed, we are to consider pictures here, we must do so in the Pinacoteca, whither so many—too many—have been taken out of the churches. The gallery of Volterra is to be found in the Palazzo dei Priori, that splendid great palace with the two-storied tower close to the cathedral in the Piazza Maggiore. Begun in 1208, and completed in 1257, the Palazzo dei Priori is very like the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence, while its tower reminds one both of that at Florence and of the Mangia of Siena.

In the Pinacoteca the Florentine school is represented chiefly by the work of Ghirlandajo and Carli. Ghirlandajo's picture, a large and curious altarpiece, the Redeemer in Glory, represents our Lord enthroned upon the Cherubim, an open book, inscribed with Alpha and Omega, in His left hand, while His right is raised in blessing. On either side an angel kneels in heaven in adoration. Beneath, as it seems in Val d' Arno, in a smiling landscape of river, hill, and valley, stand SS. Benedict and Romuald, and beside them kneel SS. Attinia and Greciniana. In the right-hand corner of the picture we see the donor, a Camaldolese, in prayer. This magnificent work comes from the Badia, to which it was given by Lorenzo de' Medici.

Raffaelle dei Carli is represented here by an altarpiece of the Madonna, Saints, and Angels—an early work Mr. Berenson tells us. We find his hand again in the Anticamera here in the Municipio, in a fresco of the Madonna and Child.

Coming now to the Sienese pictures, we turn first to the Adoration of the Shepherds by Benvenuto di Giovanni, a delicious altarpiece, where above God leans from heaven amid a crowd of singing angels to bless our world, the Holy Dove descends through the darkness, and Christ Himself, a little child, lies at His mother's feet beside the careful ox in the rude stall. Far away in the winter fields an angel tells the glad tidings of great joy to the shepherds who are come to worship Him. Beneath this simple loveliness are four *predelle* pieces of the Life of the Virgin—her Birth, her Presentation in the Temple, her Marriage, and her Assumption. This great

work was painted in 1466, and to the same year belongs the Annunciation of S. Girolamo.

An earlier painter, Taddeo di Bartolo, is represented here by a great triptych of Madonna and Child with Saints, and, charming as it is, it cannot move us in the way that perhaps the greatest Tuscan master, who was neither Florentine nor Sienese, never fails to do. There are three works by Signorelli in the Municipio, two of them in the Museo, and all were painted in 1491. The Madonna and Child with Saints comes from S. Francesco, the Annunciation from the Duomo, while the S. Girolamo, a fresco on the first landing of the staircase, is still in its own place.

But these strong or tender works, for all their rarity and beauty, have, in fact, little in common with Volterra. Day by day as you go to and fro in the narrow streets, in the continual shadow of those frowning palaces and mediæval towers, or at evening watch the sunset over the horror of the Balze, you realize that Volterra has little in common with the Tuscany you have loved—the Tuscany of Giotto, of Fra Lippo Lippi, of Botticelli, of Sano di Pietro, and Sassetta. Etruscan still, she towers over that bitter desolation of which she seems to be the final and complete expression, the last monument of a civilization titanic and incredible that forms the tremendous and hidden foundation of our own. Yes, in spite of that mediæval town which is so impressive and insistent in that naked corner of the ancient city where you dwell, your final thought of her is as of something more elemental than that, less complicated and more absolute. She has grown out of that bitter landscape which surrounds her till she has become a part of it, till in herself she has summed it up. As your eyes pass slowly from the vast height at which you seem to stand over that tremendous desolation to the far-away sea and the dark and jagged outline of the mountains of Elba and Capraja, you are conscious only of emptiness, a negation of life, as in some vast landscape in the Inferno over which the sun never rises, or where, if it rises, it has no kingdom nor effect. Then at last your gaze falls on the ruined city, out

of whose wonderful débris that huge fortress rears like some heraldic beast, a terrific sign obscuring the sky. And it is as just that, for it is your last sight of her as it was your first, that you remember her ever after—a cruel sign in heaven, the bitter, the monstrous standard of Death reared over the abyss in loneliness and desolation.

V

COLLE, POGGIBONSI, S. LUCCHESE, STAGGIA, MONTERIGGIONI, AND BADIA A ISOLA

TO cross those barren watersheds that enclose Volterra, to descend from those desolate heights, to return to Val d' Elsa, to Colle, is to achieve something more than a return to Tuscany, to all that we mean by Italy; it is, as it were, to escape from the shadow of death and to return to our world. As you cross the great hills, little by little the sun begins to shine again with its old splendour, Elsa is golden with light, the vineyards and the olive gardens seem full of joy; little by little you lift up your heart. And at Colle, which I won at evening, I found the streets happy with songs.

Set on a fair hill with a modern town at its foot, Colle, the old hill city, is one of the heroic *castelli* of this valley which led indeed to Siena, but which was so largely in the power of the Florentines. That stone signed with blood, which, as the good Villani tells us, was the foundation of Colle, is at least significant of her history, since her position here in Val d' Elsa, at the head of the valley close to Poggibonsi, on the frontiers of Florence and Siena, always thrust upon her that difficult and dangerous choice: would she follow the Sienese or the Florentines?

The cities that lie behind us in the valley — Castel-Fiorentino, Certaldo, and S. Gimignano—when the time came for them to lose what independence they had been able to win from the nobles or the Bishop who had received them from

the Empire or the Church, had, in fact, but little choice: the power of Florence was already so great that they found themselves already within her *contado*. It is different with Colle, Poggibonsi, and Staggia. These three little towns, the first two more especially, grew up actually upon the frontier, the continually disputed frontier of the two great rival states of Tuscany. And until in the end of the thirteenth century Florence finally disposed of Ghibelline Siena, the territory that lay between these little hill towns was a continual battle-field.

As might be expected, Staggia and Poggibonsi, lying so near to Siena, sided with her, while on that account Colle leaned to the side of Florence. Not that any one of the three cared more for Florence than for Siena, but that since Poggibonsi, for instance, had chosen, or had been compelled to choose, one side, Colle perforce chose the other, for in those days, the nearer the neighbour the greater the enemy.

On a larger scale one sees this extraordinary individualism in action throughout Tuscany in the Middle Age. Pisa is Ghibelline, therefore Lucca is Guelf; Florence is Guelf, therefore Pistoja and Arezzo are Ghibelline. It was not that any one of them was eager for the cause of Emperor or Pope, but that all were passionate in defence of their own independence, and sought to use the great quarrel in their own behalf. Such was the birth of Nationalism; but no one understood it. Even to Dante the condition of affairs was incomprehensible. Confused in the inevitable confusion, he cursed the cities of his fatherland, and dreaming of the Empire, welcomed into Italy a Barbarian king.

As it was with the greater cities, so it was with such *castelli* as Colle, Poggibonsi, and Staggia: with this difference, however, that whereas the greater cities were in fact independent, and only in theory at any time dependent upon the Empire or the Holy See, the smaller towns were continually and actually at the mercy of their greater neighbours, and were compelled to change their colour with the victory or defeat of these in a quarrel not their own.

Colle, which had always leaned to Florence because

Poggibonsi stood for Siena, had fallen to the Ghibellines after Montaperto in 1260. It was in 1269 that she was forced to decide once and for all, so that in that year just for a moment her history becomes vivid, looking down from her hill-top on the battle that avenged Montaperto and finally decided the fortunes of Tuscany.

The battle of Montaperto, fought and won by the Sienese and the German Ghibellines in 1260, had seemed doubtless once and for all to dispose of the Guelf cause and the power of Florence. In that fight, which dyed the Arbia red with blood, "was routed and destroyed the ancient people of Florence," more than 2,500 were slain, and over 1,500 "of the best of the People of Florence" led into captivity. Siena seemed to have the hegemony of Tuscany in her hands. And no doubt, had she followed the advice of her leader, Provenzano Salvani, and razed Florence to the ground, she might have looked forward to a century of lordship. But Farinata degli Uberti at Empoli was too strong for the lord of Siena. The man who in his fiery sepulchre seemed to Dante to hold Hell itself in scorn was not likely to be beaten by an impetuous Sienese. Alone in the assembly at Empoli, where the fate of Florence was debated, he forbade the decision that would have destroyed her. He had his way, and by that act secured the lordship of his city and the overthrow of Siena. In the year of the great victory Siena may well have thought she could afford to be generous; that again but proved her unfitness to rule. Politics know no generosity; to spare your enemy when your own life is at stake is weakness. So it proved with Siena. Six years after the battle, in 1266, the Ghibelline cause and the city of Siena received a staggering blow in the death of Manfred. In that same year a second Popolo rose in Florence, and the Conte Guido Novello, untractably Ghibelline, with his friends was expelled the city, the Guelfs were restored, and their enemies sent into exile. Two years later Corradino was taken at Tagliacozzo, and King Charles, wiser than the Sienese in the same year, struck off his head

in Naples. Where was the Ghibelline cause now? In fact, it was dead. It was but its ghost that startled Italy when Henry VII crossed the Alps—a ghost finally laid at Buonconvento in 1313.

Now in the year 1267, when Manfred was dead, Charles of Naples and the Florentines had taken Poggibonsi from the Sienese, and with it Colle. It was in June, 1269, that Provenzano Salvani, governor of Siena, thought the time had come to reclaim them. In this, too, he showed the Sienese failing—a lack of judgment.

"In the year of Christ 1269," writes Giovanni Villani,[1] "in the month of June, the Sienese, whereof M. Provenzano Salvani, of Siena, was governor, with Count Guido Novello, the German and Spanish troops, and the Ghibelline refugees from Florence and other cities of Tuscany, and with the forces of the Pisans to the number of 1,400 horse and 8,000 foot, marched upon the stronghold of Colle di Val d' Elsa, which was under the lordship of the Florentines; and this they did because the Florentines had come in May with an army to destroy Poggibonizzi. And when they had encamped at the Abbey of Spugnole,[2] and the news was come to Florence on Friday evening, on Saturday morning M. Giambertaldo, vicar of King Charles for the League of Tuscany, departed from Florence with his troops which he then had with him in Florence: to wit, 400 French horse; and sounding the bell and being followed by the Guelfs of Florence on horse and on foot, he came with his cavalry to Colle on Sunday evening; and there were about 800 horsemen or less, with but few of the people, forasmuch as they could not reach Colle so speedily as the horsemen. It came to pass on the following Monday morning, the day of S. Barnabas, in June, the Sienese, hearing that the horsemen had come from Florence, broke up their camp near the said abbey and withdrew to a safe place. M. Giambertaldo, seeing the

[1] G. Villani, "Cronica," Lib. vii, cap. 31.

[2] The Badia di Spugnole stood at the foot of the hill of Colle, on the left bank of the river.

camp in motion, without awaiting more men, passed the bridge with his horse, and marshalled his troops, with the cavalry of Florence and such of the people as had arrived, together with them of Colle (who by reason of the sudden coming of the Florentines were not duly arrayed either with captains of the host or with the standard of the commonwealth); and M. Giambertaldo took the standard of the commonwealth of Florence and requested of the horsemen of Florence, amongst whom were representatives of all the Guelf houses, that one of them should take it; but none advanced to take it, whether from cowardice [1] or through jealousy one of the other; and after they had been a long time in suspense, M. Aldobrandini, of the house of Pazzi, boldly stepped forward and said, 'I take it to the honour of God and the victory of our commonwealth;' wherefore he was much commended for his boldness. And straightway he advanced, and all the horsemen followed him and struck boldly into the ranks of the Sienese; and albeit it was not held to be very nice and prudent leadership, yet, as it pleased God, these bold and courageous folk, with good success, broke up and defeated the Sienese and their allies, which numbered well-nigh twice as many horse and a great number of foot, whereof many were slain and taken; and if on the Florentine side the foot had arrived and had been at the battle, scarce one of the Sienese would have escaped. Count Guido Novello fled, and M. Provenzano Salvani, lord and commander of the host of the Sienese, was taken prisoner; and they cut off his head and carried it through all the camp aloft on a lance. And thus was indeed fulfilled the prophecy and revelation made to him by the Devil in an incantation, though he never understood it. For having invoked him to learn how he would fare in that expedition, he made a lying answer and said, 'Thou wilt go up and fight; thou shalt conquer, not in battle shalt thou die, and thy head shall be highest in the field.' And

[1] Probably they remembered the fate of the standard at Montaperto, and the effect of its fall on the battle.

he thought he had the victory by these words, and hoped to remain lord over all, for he did not put the comma in the right place, and detect the fraud thus, 'Thou shalt conquer not, in battle shalt thou die.' . . . "

Such is Villani's account; it agrees in the main with the Sienese version, but is sparing in detail. It seems that Provenzano Salvani was taken prisoner, and after the battle Cavolino Tolomei, a Sienese exile, his personal enemy, stole in disguise through the trenches in search of him, and when he had found him, suddenly stabbed him to the heart, and cutting off his head, placed it on his lance, and so rode through the camp.

Cavolino Tolomei was not the only Sienese exile who rejoiced in the defeat of his countrymen. Sapia, a lady of Siena, watched the battle from a tower near the field, and prayed for the victory of Florence. Her confession is in the thirteenth Purgatory:—

> "Io fui Sanese, rispose, e con questi
> Altri rimondo qui la vita ria,
> Lagrimando a Colui che sè ne presti.
> Savia non fui, avvegna che Sapia
> Fossi chiamata. . . .
> Erano i cittadin miei presso a Colle
> In campo giunti co' loro avversari;
> Ed io pregava Dio di quel ch' e' volle.
> Rotti fur quivi, e volti negli amari
> Passi di fuga; e veggendo la caccia,
> Letizia presi a tutt' altre dispari;
> Tanto ch' i' volsi 'n su l' ardita faccia,
> Gridando a Dio: omai più non ti temo. . . ."

Thus was Montaperto avenged. In that vengeance the Ghibelline cause was killed, and the battle of Colle ended the age-long wars between Florence and Siena. For not long after the Florentines restored the Sienese exiles and drove out the Ghibellines, and there was peace between the commonwealths, which, according to Villani, "remained ever after friends and allies."

Lingering in Colle, to-day so full of a country quiet, one scarcely suspects it of so momentous an action as that fight

proved to be. Decay, death if you will, has fallen upon it with an infinite grace, and you pass up its steep ways, through a street of still picturesque palaces, including one by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger and the house of Arnolfo di Cambio, in and out of many churches, with an ever-fresh delight in the smiling, gay aspect of the little city so wonderfully overlooking the quiet valley. Here and there you pass a monument in those narrow ways, now and then a tabernacle made lovely by the work of some dead painter for the comfort of men dead and gone these many years, but still for our delight. In the Via Venti Settembre it is perhaps Pietro di Domenico who charms you with a fresco of the Adoration of the Magi, in the Via Gozzina and the Via S. Lucia it is Pier Francesco Fiorentino, first with a fresco of the Madonna and Child between two Bishops, and again with a fresco of the Annunciation.

And the churches are serene and glad; each possesses something to give you joy. In the Duomo, for instance, you find a fine pulpit set on four ancient marble columns; in S. Agostino, over the first altar on the right, a picture of the Madonna and Child, and a little farther on, over the third altar, a fine Pietà painted in 1521 by Ridolfo Ghirlandajo; while in the Conservatorio di S. Pietro you come upon the work of Giovanni di Paolo in a picture of the Circumcision; and in the Palazzo Antico del Comune you find two works by Pier Francesco Fiorentino—an altarpiece of the Madonna and Child and four Saints complete with *predella*, and a Madonna and Child, S. Bernardino, S. Antony Abbot, S. Mary Magdalen, and S. Catherine.

But charming as Colle is, and convenient for the wayfarer, she will not hold you long from the road that leads to Poggibonsi and Siena.

Poggibonsi, indeed, is but five miles away, and I found her one evening like a ghost on her hill over the whispering poplars. This apparition, however, proved to be the Castello, the town itself—to which I came presently—lying on a low hill close to the road and the railway in the valley. There I found a good

inn, the "Aquila," which I had not done at Colle, and for a night and a day I was content.

History has little or nothing to do with the town of Poggibonsi; where it touches her it is concerned only with the beautiful *castello*, which, after the battle of Colle, the Florentines destroyed; for Poggibonsi still clung to the bankrupt cause of the Empire: she was the friend of Siena.[1]

And to-day, save her own country beauty, she has really nothing to offer us. I wandered through her gay and noisy streets, passed in and out of her churches, and climbed in a long afternoon up to the *castello*; I found nothing but a few country frescoes.

So on the next morning soon after dawn I set out where the road led to Siena. It was still quite early; the stillness of the hours about the sunrise had not yet been broken. The whole valley was asleep, till slowly the pure, cold dawn, wrapped in a grey mantle, stole down from the hills through the woods into the vineyards and the gardens of olives. I was marching along thus in the earliest morning, singing to myself, on the way to Siena, when suddenly the road forked, and I found myself standing before a great and old church beside a convent, around which a few poor houses were set.

Now before the church stood a peasant of perhaps thirty years, and he gave me good-day. Presently, when we had spoken of the fine autumn the gods had given us mortals, and he had told me his name was Beppino and I had told him mine in English and in Italian, a little bell began to ring, and so we went into the church together, I a little in advance.

And when we had heard Mass—a low Mass said swiftly in the twilight by a little Friar of S. Francis—he presently came towards us, for, save a child who served him and two old women, we were all his congregation. He greeted Beppino, who introduced me, and then I asked him the name of this place and the dedication of the church, what fame it had and what relics, and why it was set there at a turning of the way not two miles out of Poggibonsi.

[1] See note 2, p. 320.

The last question he could not resolve, but the rest were easy. First, he told me that the name of the convent and of the place was S. Lucchese, then that it was famous on account of that very saint, who, as I doubtless knew, was a great servant of God, and moreover a Franciscan of the Third Order; and, thirdly, that the relics they had were his, and that I should see them.

We saw them, and when that was finished he proceeded to discover other treasures to us, to wit: a fine picture of the Noli Me Tangere over an altar on the right of the nave, and a Madonna and Saints by some disciple of the Robbia, made in 1514. Then, leading us both into the convent, he placed bread and wine before us, and began his tale.

"You must know, Signore, and thou, Beppino, that this church and convent were built by the Franciscans of the Observance, to which Order I also—a little poor devil—belong, and that it stands here on this hill on the site of an abbey of Benedictines called Poggiomarturi. It was here in this very place that the Emperor Henry VII encamped when he retired from that unfortunate siege of Florence, of which you have heard, Signore, and you have not, O Beppino; and in memory of this the place was called Poggio Imperiale. Also you must know that Cosimo I, the Grand-Duke, later fortified it also. These are things doubtless to lend it some little fame, but its glory, Signore, has nothing to do with emperors or dukes, or even with Benedictines—its glory is due to our most Holy Founder, S. Francesco, and to that *gran servo di Dio*, S. Lucchese, who loved him.

"This S. Lucchese, Signore, or more properly S. Lucesio, was born, as our records tell us, in the *castello* of S. Casciano, in the *contado* of Florence; others have it otherwise, but it is no matter at all, for wherever he was born it was here he lived and here he died on the 28th day of April, 1260. That was a wonderful year, as doubtless the Signore knows. Many wonderful things befell in it, but none, I can assure the Signore—none half so wonderful as those which accompanied the death of S. Lucchese.

"S. Lucchese was born, Signore, in the end of the twelfth century of very honourable ancestors, and, as it happened, in the flower of his age he fell in with a maid of the best manners and disposition, whom he married; her name was Buonadonna, whence she was called Buona or Bona. By her he had several children, whom he brought up in the fear of God. But in process of time a certain Personage in the town where he dwelt was moved by a most fierce hatred against him, so that our S. Lucchese found it best to depart from his own place and to come to Poggibonsi, where, indeed, he had some property.

"Signore and Beppino, our S. Lucchese was, as you might expect, a very good Guelf, and, having lost much of his substance in the cause, he decided here in Poggibonsi to open a little shop of *mercanzia mista*, but especially of provisions and food, which he was able to buy cheaply and to resell to great advantage, O Beppino, wherefore he made much money and grew rich.

"Now, with all respect for the Signore, who is doubtless as charitable as he is rich and powerful, riches are a great snare even to the most well disposed, and often a curse in disguise. For what is the comfort of the body in comparison with the safety and peace of the soul? Out of all comparison nothing: is it not so, Signore? Well, riches, as ever, proved a snare also to S. Lucchese. He coveted more and more, cut down his charities, and hoarded everything he could scrape up, like any peasant, O Beppino, or like any Jew. Then, Signore and Beppino, came repentance. He wept bitterly for his sin, and to remedy the evil he had done he determined to dispense all he had in charity, not waiting for his death, but immediately at that moment, O Signore and Beppino, reserving only a very small portion with which to buy a little *orticello*, a little garden plot for his sustenance and that of his wife, with whose consent he finally proposed to retire from the world. Just then, as God willed, S. Francesco himself, who dazzled the angels, came by, and S. Lucchese, moved by God, sought him out and desired from him the habit of a Tertiary of our Order,

and, indeed, Signore, he was the first that ever received it, for all this befell in 1221. No long time after his wife Bona followed his example, and determined to live a solitary life, so separating herself from her husband, not without tears, she entered the Third Order also.

"But S. Lucchese, O Signore, was not content to give all that he had to the poor; naked as he was of this world's goods, Beppino, he tramped all through the country-side begging alms from the faithful that he might spend them on the *poveri*, and especially on the sick, many of whom he would succour or take to the hospitals, carrying them thither when they were helpless on a little ass he had, bidding them bear all their miseries for the love of God. Also, each year in summer-time he would carry himself to the Maremma, where, as the Signore doubtless knows, owing to the malignity of the air at that season, many are sick and many die. To these he brought such succour as he had, and presently returned to his hermitage.

"Now, having given away everything for the love of God, he was in grievous want, and when his wife found him thus she feared for him and besought him with tears to spare himself, for indeed they loved one another very well. Going secretly to the cupboard, she found it bare, even of bread, and turned to upbraid him; but as it chanced just then, Signore and Beppino, there was a knock at the door, and when S. Lucchese opened it, behold a poor and old man seeking food. Then S. Lucchese bade his wife bring some food, but she, knowing the cupboard to be bare, laughed at him half in tears. Nevertheless, to please him when he bade her go again, she went, and, opening the cupboard, found it full of bread. And, marvelling greatly, she brought it to him; and ever after was as eager as he in her gifts, and rested not from charity.

"Twice at least each week the Blessed Lucchese with the greatest devotion received the most holy Sacraments of Penance and of the Eucharist, and because many times after receiving the Bread of the angels he went into ecstasies he hid himself;

nevertheless he was privily observed while kneeling in prayer to be lifted from the ground two or three *braccia* by unseen hands, and so to taste the delights of Paradise.

"So the fame of his sanctity was noised abroad that one day a certain priest, one Rainuccio, came to visit him, and, entering into his garden, saw that he had sown there certain onions, Beppino, and wishing to transplant some of them to his own garden the priest asked leave of the Blessed Lucchese, who readily gave it, so that he took all but a few, Beppino, and these few Rainuccio begged him to bless. After some persuasion with a certain reluctance S. Lucchese made over them the sign of the Cross, to please the priest; who, returning on the day following, found to his amazement that the onions had been replenished, O Signore and Beppino, so that they were as many as before, but that they now grew in the form of the holy sign of our salvation. And this miracle being published in these parts—to the great displeasure of the saint, who begged the priest to say nothing of it—caused the folk hereabout to venerate him more than ever.

"Well, Signore, about this time the blessed wife of this most blessed servant of God and brother of our Order fell sick, for she was growing old and had long been ailing. Therefore S. Lucchese proposed to visit her and to be present with her when she received the Blessed Sacraments. And so it happened that as she received our Blessed Lord even in that hour he prophesied in this wise: 'My most dear companion,' says he to her, 'we have already abandoned the riches of this world together in order to serve our Lord in Heaven, and He will presently grant us the grace to depart still together to rejoice in Paradise. In this expectation I also have taken these same Sacraments that I have watched you receive.' So saying he made the sign of the Cross over her, and, kneeling beside her, took her in his arms and tenderly kissed her; and thus they remained a long time, Signore, till many having entered in and watched them for some time, the parish priest spoke to them, and, getting no answer, touched the Blessed Lucchese on the shoulder: and

behold! he was dead, and his wife with him, even as he had said. All this befell, Signore and Beppino, on the 28th day of April, 1260, and on that day we keep the feast here in this church, which was built in their honour."

"Well," said I, after a properly long minute, "I thank you for your story."

"But as to the onions . . ." said Beppino.

No one spoke. Only the Frate rolled a grave eye over Beppino, that summed him up from head to foot.

"I was thinking of the onions," said Beppino again a little hurriedly. "It seems to me, Messer Frate, that this holy man, of whom you have had the politeness to tell us, may well have sown them too profusely, as one is apt to do if one is thinking of other things, as in my case girls, as in his saints in Paradise. It comes to the same thing, does it not, Signore? I mean it has the same effect. Thus, since he had sown these onions too thick, when the *prete* took away the greater part of them—and we know how natural that was—this Blessed San Lucchese transplanted the rest, as one who loves onions and knows them will never omit to do, and he planted them in the shape of the Holy Cross to please his fancy. Now it runs in my head that when the priest returned with a guilty conscience, Signore—for had he not taken as many as he could carry?—he jumped to the conclusion, when he saw the ground all planted out, in that holy shape, too, that the Blessed Angel guardian of S. Lucchese had got even with the devil for once. Therefore he raised that hue and cry, deceived by his own evil heart. And it is easy to understand the distress of S. Lucchese when that old rooster, thinking he had happened on a wonder, went crowing through the *paese*—for he was a very honest man, and he could not expose religion when once it had committed itself to that tale. So, Signore, he shouldered the miracle."

"But," said I, hastily, seeing that the Frate had long had the fidgets, "but what then of the bread that was there and not there? and then, again, what of the ecstasies, the lifting from the ground, the prophecies?"

"The Signore says well," said the little Frate in a terrible voice, low and a little shaky; "what of the bread, Beppino, that was not there, what of the ecstasies and the lifting, Beppino?"

Beppino was in no way disturbed: he looked across the valley to the far hills. Then he spoke. "In the matter of bread," said he, "I am no expert; ecstasies, Messere, I confess I know nothing of, nor of such lifting or prophecies as you describe. These may all be as they may be; *but onions I know!* . . ."

Beppino left me at the gates of Staggia, some five *chilometri* up the valley, where he had business. Here I was truly across the Sienese frontier, of which this old and broken fortress had been one of the guards. A walled village about a *rocca*, Staggia is a ruin; what remains of life is to be found in the plain at the foot of the hill on which the old *rocca* stands, beside which passes the Roman road and the torrent that takes its name from the fortress.

Staggia is an ancient lordship and stronghold of those nobles, descended, as some say, from the Contessa Matilda, who took the surname de' Franzesi. They ruled in Staggia from 994 certainly till 1227, when the people of the place united themselves by a public act dated 10 August to the Commune of Poggibonsi, and from that time Staggia and her district remained a part of that Commune. Before that, however, in 1156, and again in 1174, Staggia had been in the thick of the quarrels between Florence and Siena, and had been able to give a good account of herself. But to-day she is of little account, her picturesque ruins tell no tale, nor has she much to offer us in the way of entertainment. Only in her Pieve di S. Maria you may see a fine picture, a panel painted in oil, from the hand of Antonio Pollaiuolo,[1] of the Communion of S. Mary of Egypt. This fine work was rescued from the neglect into which it had fallen by an

[1] *Cf.* Crowe and Cavalcaselle (ed. Edward Hutton), "A New History of Painting in Italy" (Dent, 1909–10), vol. ii, p. 387.

American, the well-known connoisseur, Mr. F. Mason Perkins. To his enthusiasm the wayfarer in Southern Tuscany owes very much, as we shall presently see, but I think our debt to him was never so obvious as it is here in Staggia, where is conserved for our delight a masterpiece by one of the greatest masters of Florence, not in a gallery but in the church for which it was painted, in this lonely and half-deserted village.

From this poor place I was glad to set out on the road again that led me still up the valley of the Staggia, ever nearer to Siena. It was not quite midday when I set out, and though the valley was delicious to look upon and cooler than the hills, it was yet very hot. Nevertheless I stuck manfully to the road, with the promise of Siena in my heart at evening. So I marched, not singing now but in silence, till after some seven *chilometri* of dust and sun the towers of Monteriggioni rose before me across a bend of the river about a low, isolated hill.

More beautiful than Staggia, Monteriggioni has yet much the same character; it is a walled village, half-deserted now, close to Via Francigena. Nothing is known of its origin or whence it had its name. We shall, however, certainly not be far wrong if we conclude that it was built by the Sienese to guard their northern approach. Andrea Dei even tells us that it was first fortified by the Sienese in the year 1219, the same year, he says, in which the façade of the Duomo of Siena was completed. However that may be, long before that we read of it as a fortress, and sixteen years before, it suffered siege.

In 1254 it was ably defended, and successfully resisted the Florentines when they attacked Siena and destroyed Poggibonsi for the first time. After Montaperto it was fortified again, and more strongly, by Siena, and it was then Dante saw it "crowned with towers,"[1] so that he likens that abyss "turreted with giants," which he describes in the thirty-first Inferno, to this great *castello*.

So strong was it that in 1266, owing to the general insecurity of the country-side, the people of Badia a Isola and of

[1] *Cf.* Aquarone, "Dante in Siena" (Città di Castello, 1889), cap. iv, pp. 64–69.

the places round were invited by the Nine of Siena to enter, or at least to live under the *castello*. Though it seems to have escaped the fate of Poggibonsi in 1269, it fell into the grasp of Florence at last some three hundred years later, on 25 August, 1554, when the Marchese di Marignano, commandant-general of the Imperial and Medicean army, took it on his way to Siena. But by then Italy was dead.

Now, as it happened, it was here in Monteriggioni that my plan of walking into Siena at nightfall came to nothing. For at the inn they told me of a certain abbey hard by, now fallen to a mere parish church, which conserved even yet certain pictures beyond price. And so, often as I had been deceived by such rumours, being in the mood for adventures, I set out.

I found the Abbey, Badia a Isola, some two miles away to the west of Monteriggioni. It is very ancient, most worthy of a visit, and possesses, as they had told me, three fine pictures of the school of Siena. It gets its name, as you might suppose, from the nature of the country hereabout, on the lower flanks of Monte Maggio, where a little lake has formed, so that the Abbey was often called not only Badia a Isola, but Badia del Lago. Founded in 1001 by the Contessa Ava, daughter of Conte Zanobi, and widow of Ildebrando dei Franzesi di Staggia, near her *castello* of Borgonuovo, with the consent of her sons, Tegrimo and Benzo, it was enriched from time to time by this illustrious clan. Many Popes confirmed it in its growing power and wealth, and we see the fruit of these concessions, gifts, and favours in the baronial dominion which the Benedictines exercised in those early centuries over the territory of their churches, towns, and *castelli* in the country between Siena and Poggibonsi. In 1221 Corrado, Bishop of Spira and Legate of Frederic II, on behalf of the Empire confirmed to them in feud all these possessions in a diploma of 28 December.

For some two hundred years they seem to have flourished, till in 1446, owing to the growing unhealthiness of the district, caused no doubt by the continual wars, the monks of S. Salvatore, for the Badia was dedicated to our Saviour, were

reunited by a Brief of Eugenius IV with those of their Order at S. Eugenio, some two miles to the south of Siena.

Their church, with the annexed S. Rufiniano, was continued as a parish church and baptistery, which it remains to this day. It is a building of three naves upheld by columns, and in the sacristy is the tomb of the founder, Contessa Ava, with her bust on a column of granite. In the church itself I found the pictures I had come to see: a fine fresco of the Madonna, Saints, and Angels, by Taddeo di Bartolo; again, on the left wall, there is a fresco of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, very fine and imposing, with single figures of Saints, by Vecchietta; and a great polyptych over the high altar is by Sano di Pietro. More precious still, perhaps, is an altarpiece by some follower of Duccio.[1]

All this was very well worth coming to see, but it effectually prevented my reaching Siena afoot that night. Perhaps I lingered too long amid this country loveliness in one of the sweetest and quietest byways of Tuscany. However that may be, it was not to Monteriggioni I returned, but over the hills to the station of Castellina, and so, though I reached Siena at evening, it was by train in the company of a host of poor people, who made me welcome and joined with me in praise of the incomparable city we all loved—*Sena Vetus, Civitas Virginis.*

[1] On Badia a Isola see V. Lusini in *Bullettino Senese*, An iv (1897), pp. 129–135, and A. Canestrelli in *Siena Monumentale*, An ii (1908), fasc. i and iv.

VI

SIENA

I THINK perhaps there is nothing in the world quite like Siena, no other place, at any rate, that has just her gift of expression, her quality of joy, of passion, of sheer loveliness. It is true that in Florence you will find a clear, intellectual beauty, virile and full of light; that in Assisi, that little super-terrestrial city in Umbria, a mysterious charm—is it the beauty of holiness?—will discover itself to you in the memory of a love, touching and still faintly immortal, pathetically reminding you of itself like the fragrance of a wild flower on that rude mountain-side; but in Siena you have something more than these, something more human and not less divine—how shall I say?—you have everything that the heart can desire: a situation lofty and noble, an aspect splendid and yet ethereal, a history brave, impetuous, and unfortunate, a people still living yet still unspoiled by strangers. Yes, Siena set so firmly on her triune hill, towers there even to-day with a gesture of joy, radiant and beautiful, caught about by her vineyards as with a kirtle of green, girdled with silver and gold—the silver of her olives mixed with the gold of her corn.

It is thus she always seems to me when I come to her, it is thus I always remember her from afar, a place of happiness, of welcome, a fortress still, it is true, but without a threat—a fortress dismantled, in the hands of invincible peace, where every tower has become a dwelling-house, every bastion a garden, every bulwark a shady walk, where the gates are open wide that the children may run in and out.

IL CAMPO, SIENA

Come to her any spring morning from Florence, where a certain surliness in the people might seem to bear witness to the foreign domination there, and she will win you at once. A certain sparkle and sweet glitter in the light, even without the gates, lifts up your heart, and long before you have passed half-way down Via Cavour the charm of the place has fallen upon you almost in spite of yourself, unreasonably, too, for you will never be able to decide just what it is that has caught you, to define in what her delight consists. Is it in her aspect of conscious life, her unity, her individuality, her aloofness, the city climbing upward, built as it were in one piece, crowding round the Cathedral, and sharply divided from the country which the walls scarcely thrust back? Is it in the architecture, the sheer beauty of form and colouring of the city itself, so consoling after the philistinism of Florence? Or is it in the people, their speech so pure that any other sounds like a dialect, their manners, their noble bearing, their fine courtesy, so that you discern in them at once the aristocracy of Italy? Or is it in the beauty of the women?—and there are no such women anywhere else in Italy as those pale, wilful, sweet ladies who pass and repass up and down Via Cavour in the twilight with a mother or a husband or a sturdy little maid for company and protection. Or is it in the laughter of the children, so fresh and so delicious in the cool green of the Lizza, which you may hear any golden morning and can never forget, since it is the one thing which reminds you of home? It is perhaps all these things together and a thousand beside which your heart takes note of though you be all unaware.

The modern spirit, a mean utilitarianism, has stolen away the universal beauty of Rome, is even now overthrowing Venice, and has rebuilt and ruined Florence; but Siena it has not really touched, she remains perfectly herself. Perhaps it is in that we find a good part of our delight. No noisy trams rush through her beautiful mediæval streets, which are still lined with palaces, splendid and severe; not separated from the lesser houses, but joined to them with only here

and there an opening through which you see a vista of steep, lofty narrow way under an arch, perhaps, that leads suddenly and swiftly down into the valley, or winds slowly up-hill, where the wind rushes madly to and fro or sighs wearily in the darkness, where the sun rarely peeps. And these streets that tunnel and climb and wind so narrowly and steeply through the city are at once lively and quiet—lively by reason of the children who play in them, the women who gossip at their shadowy doorways, the pedlars and hawkers who cry their wares between these ancient echoing walls. The only traffic that passes up and down these paved, narrow, twisting, climbing ways is the *barocci* of the charcoal merchants, the asses of the woodmen laden with wood from the mountains, or the great wagons drawn by drowsy white oxen, whose horns almost touch the houses on either side the narrow ways as they draw slowly home the burden of wine from the vineyard. Yes, they are quiet enough, only never silent, echoing every now and then with the musical cries of pedlars above the voices of many women, mixed with the laughter, the inarticulate cries of babies, of children. And in and out of these narrow ways, now hidden by a tower or shut out by a high roof, the sun looks down and the shadows advance and recede, and over all, between the tall houses, is a strip of soft blue sky.

It is much the same with the great street lined with little shops—the chief street of Siena, which runs quite through the city, entering at the Porta Camollia and leaving by the Porta Romana, the Via Francigena, indeed, though within the walls it is called by various names, of which the chief is Via Cavour.

Here the sweet noises of life, so individual in the narrow, steep ways, are mingled together and broken for the first time by the sound of wheels. You come into this clamour on your way from Porta Camollia, where the Via delle Belle Arti turns down-hill. A mere vague murmur at first, it waxes louder and louder, resolving itself at last into the hum of many voices, till, before the Loggia dei Nobili, where a great crowd conducts its business in the street, you come really into the midst of it, and

are surprised when, having pushed your way through these busy, cheerful people, in less than twenty yards you find yourself alone again on that paved way, between the tall, sober palaces, almost in silence.

But though it be in her streets—these narrow, lofty byways—that Siena is still living and to be found, it is not in them that she has set her pride. All the nobility, the impetuous ardour and valour of Siena, for the most part unrepresented or at least largely invisible in her streets, is to be found in the Campo—that beautiful piazza, shaped like a shell, before which stands the rosy Palazzo Pubblico, over which rises the loveliest tower in Italy, La Mangia. This is the true centre of the city; and in its light, its fantastic and lovely shape, in the dizzy and noble height of its tower, all that is most characteristic of Siena might seem to be hidden and expressed. Yet that palace, that piazza, that tower stand less conspicuous in any view of Siena from the walls than the Cathedral, which, set on a spur of one of the three hills on which Siena stands, shines like some precious casket or tabernacle far over the country-side—the capitol of the city of the Virgin.

Nothing in Siena becomes her so well, or so certainly sums her up as her Cathedral, into which, in its aloofness, its pride, its distinction, its beauty, and broken ambition, the history of the city seems to have passed. It is set perfectly in a great, silent space, a miracle of light. It is true its façade is disappointing, but it is something more than a barn before which a miracle has been performed, as Orvieto is. Look at it from the Lizza; it is like a pure virgin guarding the city, the long, exquisite line of the aisles broken by the perfect transept, and the great octagon over it. Enter and be comforted by the distinction of its colouring, the strength and majesty of its romanesque, the nobility of its lantern over the crossing. It is here and in those great lean churches, S. Domenico and S. Francesco, that you will learn what Siena is, her true aspect—there and in the altarpieces of Duccio, the pictures of Simone Martini and the Lorenzetti. For in the strangely

ardent, almost pathetic beauty of Siena there is something Byzantine, an exquisite finish, an elaborate ornament which belong to the earliest painters of miniatures. Often at evening, looking on her from S. Barbara when the world is so quiet, and in the dim valleys and on the clear hill-sides the grey olives are a mist of silver, the cypresses very still and black against the blue and gold of the sky, suddenly she has seemed to me, piled up so closely, house over house, church over church, tower over tower, culminating in that almost visionary Duomo, like a city out of a missal—one of those exquisite, unreal places past which the Magi came to Bethlehem—the very city at whose gate S. Anne waited for Joachim, in whose valleys Christ was baptized by John, against whose battlements of old was set the Crucifixion.

For there is an element not wholly explicable in Siena—an element of strangeness, of wonder, which we must confess we do not wholly understand. As she stands there on her triune hill, dreaming of the Middle Age, she seems more than a city, more than the work of man, for she expresses something that is hidden from us, that we can only guess at dimly as we gaze over her profound valleys across the garden of her *contado* to the desert on whose verge she stands.

It is just that, perhaps, which day by day as you abide with her comes at last to impress you most, to mix with your every thought of her and in some dim way seems to have informed her with itself: she stands on the edge of the wilderness and looks all day long across a vast desolation to the faint, far-away outline of a great mountain—the most beautiful mountain in Tuscany, Mont' Amiata.

It is this spectacle, so profound, moving, and expressive, that little by little grows into your heart as you pass up and down the steep, winding, narrow streets, from church to church, from palace to palace, from sanctuary to sanctuary: the smiling, gay persuasive loveliness of Siena is set against the solemnity of that beautiful mountain, against the barren loneliness of that desert, out of whose virile and mysterious beauty she has sprung up like a rare and delicate flower. It

SIENA FROM THE VALLEY

is this contrast which, as it seems to me, lends her half her charm. On the verge of that vast country of scarred rock and channelled clay, where the sun is without pity and there is no sound or song, she seems more human in her beauty than in fact she is. For, with all her happiness and joy, she is aware of the loneliness that is about her; she never forgets the bitterness of the desert or the silence of the mountains on which she must look all day long. You will find them not only in herself, in the city we see to-day, but in everything she has done. For in her story, as in her work—the great altar-piece of Duccio, for instance, the lovely spellbound pictures of Simone Martini, the flowerlike panels of Sassetta, her vast, cold Duomo, her dizzy Mangia tower, there is that element of strangeness without which, it is true, there is no excellent beauty, but which here seems to be their chief characteristic. How sensitive they are to that silent country out of which they are sprung! They have understood the mystery of that desert, and have drawn from its lean strength a certain curious sweetness.

Nor is it only in material things such as these that we find that strangeness which is so characteristic of her, but in her history also and in those who made it; above all, in her saints and in that religion which, with her alone in Tuscany, was mystical. Consider then such an action, almost religious in itself, as the battle of Montaperto and all that led up to it—the strange self-abnegation, self-accusation, and love, the impassioned belief which, in fact, caused the miracle; consider the wild prayers for as miraculous a deliverance from Charles V; consider S. Catherine and S. Bernardino; but chiefly consider that worship of the Blessed Virgin in which the whole city expressed itself, which compelled every gentleman to place his hands between hers and to swear allegiance, and which inspired an impassioned loyalty in every man, woman, and child.

In all these actions and in all these people there is an element of insanity, something strange and unconfined, out of proportion, as it were, with anything but that vast waste

country of barren clay and rock which is stretched out before her, across which the eternal mountains shine.

In summer, half veiled in heat, invisible at noon, and beautiful at evening, you miss its true character and meaning. But watch it on a dark or threatening day, a day of storm or wind, when it surges against every gate and is uptossed by every bastion. It is as though that masculine and voracious wilderness, more barren and more terrible than the sea, had hurled itself against the city, and would have consumed her but for the protection of Her she still invokes, in Whom for so many ages she has found safety and peace.

VII

POLITICAL SIENA

THE story of Siena, as we examine it now, eager for the mere truth, and not to be overwhelmed or deceived by the facts or the rhetoric of chroniclers or historians, would seem to resolve itself into the narrative of a struggle waged by a great hill-town against forces greater than itself, against forces that from the beginning were too strong for it. These forces, so certainly antagonistic to the real establishment of Siena as the great power in Tuscany, were of two kinds—the one geographical and the other political, more or less deriving from the first. Set as she was, upon a goodly hill, the last westward spur of the Chiana range, in the very heart of Tuscany, Siena was from the first a lonely city; lonely not only in that she had, and could have, no near neighbours, but geographically lonely, too, in that the country which surrounded her was very distant from the sea and provided no natural highway, such as a river, by which she might reach the world—on the contrary, the nature of the country in itself cut her off from every part of Italy. To the south lay a vast desert of rock and clay in which nothing would grow or prosper; to the west lay the Maremma, a loneliness of swamp and death; while to the north and east lay difficult ranges of hills. This loneliness in the earliest Middle Age was somewhat mitigated, it is true, by the coming of that great road Via Francigena which united Cisalpine Gaul with Rome; but, on the other hand, nothing was done then—very little has been done even to-day—to provide against the most serious of all

the drawbacks from which the city suffered, the want of water —not merely the lack of a great river such as the Arno, which was crudely navigable certainly so far as Signa—but the want of water for industrial purposes. Thus from the beginning Nature herself had handicapped Siena beyond hope in the race for the headship of Tuscany. Nor was the other force which prohibited her victory less formidable. Something has already been said of the psychological and spiritual influence of the landscape, of the world in which she stands, on the city herself; its action upon the people of Siena was not less profound. Impetuous, easily cast down, as easily uplifted, without persistence or that unconscious and almost brutal strength, characteristic of every people destined for domination, Siena was from the first at the mercy of her great and cruel antagonist, Florence, the favourite of Nature, who had been given everything Siena lacked—a magnificent position in Val d' Arno between three mountain passes, easily rendered impregnable; a splendid navigable river within reach; a race without aristocratic prejudices, cunning, formidable, and persistent.

From the first, then, there was no doubt as to which of these two cities would in the end dominate Tuscany, and perhaps hold the balance of power in Italy; their story but confirms our logic.

Thus Siena is a city of the Middle Age. Her great period, if that can be called great in which so little was achieved, and which was always on the verge of disaster, is the thirteenth century. After that time her geography, her civil discord, a shameful foreign policy, an unimaginable disaster brought her to nothing.[1]

Her romantic story, more fascinating, certainly more sympathetic, than that of her great rival, invites us to inquire into her origin, if so be we may find there the causes of her decadence, though, in fact, they are writ large enough for all to see in the strange and beautiful country in which she lies. Her origin, however, is hidden from us. The

[1] See note 7, p. 326.

oldest chronicler who speaks of her is our John of Salisbury, who asserts that she was founded by the Britons, a certain Brennus, captain of the Senones, having provided a camp here for his sick and wounded soldiers.[1] This legend, however, fantastic as it is, does not explain the Sienese badge of the wolf and the twins, which first appears, indeed, in the thirteenth century. Some legend, indeed, older than any we now possess connecting Siena with Rome there must have been, but whatever it was archæology does not support it. On the contrary, if it assures us of anything, it is of the Etruscan origin of Sena Vetus, for a small Etruscan Necropolis has been uncovered near the Porta Camollia, and so far as we may know it seems probable that it was not till B.C. 90 that the Sienese were granted by the *Lex Julia* citizenship of Rome. Even if this much be true, it would prove no more than the existence of a community, probably on the hill we now call Castel Vecchio, in the later days of the Roman Republic. What is certain, however, is that it was Augustus who, in B.C. 29, established Sena as a Roman colony. Of her condition under the Empire we know little. It is legend which tells us, without much authority, that it was S. Ansano who converted her to Christianity. Before the fifth century, however, she certainly received a Bishop and became the capital of a See. That she was ruined with the advent of the Dark Ages seems certain; at any rate, we hear nothing of her till Rotharis, King of the Longobards, restored her Bishopric in the seventh century, when there followed what was probably her first quarrel with one of her sister cities, Arezzo, which was not finally decided till fifty years later, after the restoration of the Empire.

[1] This story, and others more vague but of a like nature, have been eagerly accepted by the Florentine chroniclers, who gladly asserted that Siena owed her origin to an infirm and foreign folk (*cf.* Villani, Lib. i, cap. lvi). The legends of Siena's Roman origin belong to the Renaissance. See L. Douglas's "History of Siena," p. 5; E. G. Gardner's "Story of Siena," and W. Heywood's Historical Introduction to "A Guide to Siena" (Torrini, Siena); and notes 3 and 4, *infra*, p. 321.

That restoration confirmed, if it did not establish, the power of the Bishop in Siena, as in other cities, and at the same time Feudalism, that marvellous and logical theory of political and economic life, began to take the place of the independent, anarchic allodial system. Feudal castles held by Imperial nobles sprang up in the *contado*, holding the road to Rome and the ways to the sea, and all who passed by paid tribute. Nor was the property of the city itself exempt. Indeed, a continual war was waged by the nobles the one upon another, and thus the whole country was kept in a condition of fear and insecurity. This state of affairs in some sort explains the power of the Bishops in all the Tuscan and Umbrian cities. For the citizens, untrained to war, townsmen as they were, anxious for trade, could do nothing against these nobles, who, in such aeries as the Aldobrandeschi possessed in S. Fiora, were really answerable to no one, and entirely safe and invincible. Thus it was to the Church, and first to the spiritual power of the Church, that the citizens looked for protection and redress. So things developed through the ninth and tenth centuries, till in the eleventh we find the Emperor eager to acknowledge the temporal dominion of the Sienese Bishop; nor does it seem that he was sorry to find a power strong enough to curb his unruly barons, whom he was powerless to keep in order. In this way the Bishop gradually became a tenant *in capite* of the Empire, and, in fact, wielded, beside his spiritual power, a very considerable temporal weapon also. Thus the Bishop as a temporal lord owed a new allegiance to the Emperor as well as his ancient and original allegiance to the Pope.[1] As temporal lord he superseded the Count, the earlier representative of the Crown in Siena, and ruled absolutely within the walls of the city. This rule was good for Siena; it protected the people from spoliation at the hands of the nobles of the surrounding country and at the hands of the hordes of Barbarians that were continually marching through Italy. It failed at last because ultimately

[1] See note 5, p. 322.

the Bishop was dependent for armed force on a part at any rate of the people. This party, the *milites*, the fighting-men, forced him to admit them to a part in the government. Consuls arose, their representatives, who at first shared the government with the Bishop, and at length superseded him as he had superseded the Counts.

Thus rose the Commune, at first a completely aristocratic state, but modified little by little till the party opposed to the *milites*, the *populus*, obtained a real part in it. But even before that the supersession of the Bishop was certain. An opportunity soon offered itself. A quarrel about the jurisdiction of a monastery in the *contado* which was dependent on a convent in Florence, and which the Sienese wished to see placed under the rule of Vallombrosa, was the ostensible cause of the final rupture with the Bishop and the Church. The Consuls went so far in 1169 as to try to compel the clergy to acknowledge the antipope when Alexander III would not grant their request. But the real reason of this rupture was jealousy of Florence. The Emperor had already in 1158 acknowledged the existence of the Commune, and had protected it. And we may see perhaps the first expression of the Ghibellinism of the Commune in its breaking with the Church, and gladly becoming the great feud of the Empire in the heart of Tuscany.

The allegiance of Siena directly to the Emperor does not seem to have been given without an attempt on the part of the Church party to prevent it. In 1185 we find the city divided, and on the advent of Frederic the Church party, in a moment of tumult, shut the gates against him, and defeated him in the battle of Rosario. A year later peace was re-established, and the Commune undertook to pay an annual tribute, while it gained a full recognition of its right to elect Consuls, to issue money, and to tax its citizens and its vassals in the *contado*. Among the first works of the Commune was that of gradually forcing the nobles of the *contado* to come into the city. Thus began the allegiance of Siena to the Emperor—an allegiance strengthened in 1209 by the visit of

Otho IV to the city, when all the privileges of the Commune were confirmed.

In the first years of the thirteenth century, therefore, we see the Commune firmly established, allied with the Emperor for their common good, but in fact his vassal owing him allegiance. For Siena had become nothing less than a feudatory of the Italian kingdom; her relation to the Emperor was the same as that of the dukes and marquises of Germany; she was his tenant *in capite*, while the nobles of her *contado* submitted to her suzerainty were *arrere* vassals. Indeed, the relation of the *contado* to Siena was as substantially feudal as was her relation to the Emperor.

But the history of Siena in the thirteenth century is the history of her rivalry with Florence, in which for a brief moment she gained the advantage, only to be finally beaten in the fight for supremacy before the century's end. The struggle has little or nothing to do with the claims of Pope or Emperor; it has absolutely nothing to do with any struggle between the aristocracy and the democracy; it is primarily an economic struggle, in which Siena, starting with a seeming advantage, was betrayed from the beginning by Nature, by her geographical position, and the character of her people.

Like most of the great wars, this small but famous combat was a fight for commerce. At the opening of the thirteenth century the Sienese were the great bankers and tradesmen of Italy. When the Commune forced the nobles of the *contado* into the city they had devoted themselves to the formation of commercial companies of adventure. They dealt in money chiefly, but also engaged in the Eastern trade and established houses in England and France. They were the bankers of the Holy See, and in return the Church helped them to collect their debts. It is, then, as the determined commercial rivals of Siena that we see the Florentines time after time, from the end of the twelfth century till their final victory at Colle, attack Siena. On the other hand, all the policy of Siena was devoted to the protection and development of what

she possessed. She sought to subdue the great feudatories of the *contado* in order to ensure the safety of the roads to Rome, to the North, to the sea. Florence opposed her and supported or encouraged the feudatories in order that she might herself dominate these roads. For this cause she would not permit Siena to establish herself in Montepulciano and Montalcino to the South, or in Staggia or Poggibonsi to the North. Florence herself tried to hold the Chiana valley, and supported the Aldobrandeschi in their struggle with Siena in the Maremma.

We shall see when we come to examine the region to the south of Siena between Asciano and Mont' Amiata how favourable that desert region of low clay hills was to that robber nobility which Siena sought to vanquish for the sake of her trade. Yet she beat them, and her victory was used with wisdom and moderation; but it achieved little more than to unmask the real enemy who stood behind these chieftains; whom she could never destroy.

It is thus that all through the first half of the thirteenth century we see Siena fighting with the nobles of the *contado*, reducing them to impotence, and in their place establishing her own power.[1] This great work can never have been more than half done, for she was always compelled to consider and nearly always to come to terms with Florence. From the first she fought a losing battle; Montaperto, that resounding victory, after all has no importance—it was but an incident.

In the first year of the thirteenth century Siena was forced by her rival to give up all hope of domination in the Val d' Elsa, for Florence seized Semifonte, the strongest fortress in that region; in return, Siena was allowed the right to take Montalcino if she could. No doubt she sacrificed the North in the hope of finally securing the South. If any such hope was in her, she was wofully deceived. With Montalcino in her hands, she tried to occupy Montepulciano. Florence immediately refused to permit this, at the same time laying

[1] See note 6, p. 325.

claim to Tornano, a fortress less than nine miles north-east of Siena. The whole quarrel was submitted to the decision of the Podestà of Poggibonsi, who so far favoured Florence that he deprived the Sienese of any rights they had in Poggibonsi, and brought the Florentine frontier within six miles of Siena on the north. Florence immediately allied herself with Montepulciano. Siena appealed to the Tuscan League, to which both she and Florence belonged. The League decided that Montepulciano belonged to Siena; Florence promptly repudiated the decision. War followed in 1207, and Siena was signally beaten at Montalto. Before peace was signed in 1208, Siena was forced to renounce the rights she claimed in Poggibonsi and those she had been awarded in Montepulciano. There followed fifteen years of peace, which saw the prosperity of Siena wonderfully increased, in spite of her loss of territory. Frederic II befriended her and established Poggibonsi as an Imperial stronghold, at the head of the Val d' Elsa, similar to S. Miniato at its mouth. Florence, meanwhile, was at war with Pisa, and Siena seized the opportunity to consolidate her power to the south, humbling the Aldobrandeschi and taking Grosseto from them, thus establishing herself in the Val di Merse and the Val di Ombrone.

This seemed so like success, that in 1228 Siena made another attempt to bring Montepulciano under her rule. But the time was unfortunate; Frederic II had just abandoned the Crusade, and when he returned to it, nevertheless the Pope cursed him. This set all Italy by the ears, and revived the old quarrel, and Orvieto, in secret treaty with Florence, renewed an old alliance with Montepulciano. In the war which followed success at first still favoured Siena, but presently Aldobrandino Aldobrandeschi forsook her, and she seems to have lost heart. At any rate, the Florentines were able to destroy very many of her fortresses and to burn and spoil her *contado* up to her very walls, taking at last Porta Camollia by surprise and entering the city as far as S. Pietro della Ragione, and, according to

the Florentine chronicler, "had they not been pitiful, they might have destroyed all Siena with fire and sword."

Then Siena, in her great danger, put aside the private quarrels that distracted the state, and beat back the Florentines. Nevertheless, she lost Montalcino and any chance she had of bringing Montepulciano under her sway. Yet two years later she took the place, avenged herself on Orvieto, and made a new compact with Montalcino. But Florence was not to be denied. In 1233 she stirred up the people of Montalcino to revolt; she once more ravaged the *contado*, and this time for two years. Siena was reduced to starvation. By 1235, in spite of the capture of Campiglia d' Orcia, on the slope of Mont' Amiata, a very redoubtable piece of work, Siena was ready for peace at any price. It was granted on condition of a renunciation of lordship in Montepulciano and restoration to Orvieto of all that had been taken from her, and among other things a dissolution of an alliance made during the war with Poggibonsi.

Siena was in the dust, but she was still alive; her commerce remained to her, and, as so often happens after a defeat, she reformed her constitution, setting up now the famous Council of the Twenty-Four—half nobles, half *popolani* — under which she was to attain her greatest triumph.

The new Government enjoyed a long peace of fifteen years. In June, 1240, Frederic II visited the city, and was joyfully received, but his exactions daunted the people, and Provenzano Salvani, the greatest of the Sienese, who now comes on the scene, went so far as to bid them not to invite ruin for the sake of the Emperor, but to use him for their own advantage. Ten years later Frederic was dead, and the Ghibelline cause, which had seemed so prosperous, was in jeopardy. Indeed, in a moment the whole position had been changed, or, rather, the development which had been taking place was suddenly obvious to all. Florence seized her opportunity, and, thinking to free herself from Pisa, whose port had been necessary to her, she made a compact with Guglielmo Aldobrandeschi for

a free passage of goods through his dominions to the Maremma port of Talamone. Pisa, thinking her prosperity to be threatened, agreed with Siena, Pistoia, and Arezzo, while Florence answered by calling Genoa, Lucca, and Orvieto to her aid.

War broke out in the autumn of 1251. The Sienese armies were beaten, and Pisa submitted. The result, however, was fortunate for Siena in this, for the Florentines, with Porto Pisano open to them, gave up all thought of Talamone.

The peace of 1254 thus secured was, however, but a truce. In September of that very year Manfred, Frederic's natural son, who had sworn allegiance to Innocent III, revolted. Gathering his Moslems, he made war in Apulia, and recovered that province for himself. In the midst of the successes of his enemy Innocent died.

At first it seemed as though the new peace of Tuscany would not be broken. In July, 1255, the envoys of Florence and Siena met and concluded an "eternal amity," which, as it happened, lasted scarcely three years. By this peace the two cities swore, among other things, not to harbour one another's exiles; but when, in 1258, the Ghibellines were expelled from Florence, Siena took them in. From that moment war was merely a question of opportunity.

Preparations to meet it were made during the ensuing year both in Siena and in Florence. In the spring of 1259 Siena sent ambassadors to Manfred for his assistance. He agreed to send help, and in December Giordano of Anglano, cousin of the King, entered Siena with his knights, to be joined later by a troop of German horse. Florence meanwhile engineered a revolt in the Maremma. Grosetto and her sister cities rebelled, but with the help of the German horse Siena was able to compel surrender. Then Florence decided upon personal action. It is impossible to deny that she was threatened. Manfred's troops in Siena forced her to make war. She set forth some thirty thousand strong with the *carroccio*, but the vast body of troops moved slowly, and a month elapsed before it came in sight of Siena. There followed some doubtful

skirmishes, in which the German troops of the Sienese seem to have suffered badly. Then the Florentines marched away. The Sienese, having been reinforced by Manfred, prosecuted the war. They tried to seize Montalcino. So the Florentines set out again in August with contingents from Prato, Volterra, S. Gimignano, and Bologna, by way of Val di Pesa, and pitched camp not far from the castle of Montaperto in Val d' Arbia.

From Pieve Asciata ambassadors had been despatched to Siena with an insolent ultimatum. They arrived in Siena on 2 September, and they found the Council of the Twenty-Four in session in the church of S. Cristofano in Piazza Tolomei. "Without making any reverence or obeisance," they delivered their message:[1] "We will that this city be forthwith dismantled and that all the walls shall be levelled with the ground that we may enter and depart at our pleasure. . . . And further we will to place a Signoria in every Terzo of Siena at our pleasure; in like manner to build forthwith a strong fortress in Camporegi and to garrison and provision it and to maintain the same for our magnificent and potent Commune of Florence; and this right quickly without any delay. As for you, if ye do not do all that we have commanded you, ye may await with certainty to be besieged. . . ."

The Twenty-Four replied, without boasting, in the following manner: "We have heard and understood that which ye have demanded, and we bid you return to the captain and to the commissaries of your Commune and to say unto them that we will give them answer face to face."

The chronicler continues: "Now the citizens of Siena had heard of the cruel demand of the Florentines . . . and all the city was moved. And all the people left their dwellings and came to S. Cristofano; and so great was the multitude of the people in Piazza Tolomei and through all the streets that scarcely were they able to contain them.

[1] I use the splendid translation here and in what follows of Mr. William Heywood. See "Palio and Ponte" (Methuen, 1904), p. 25, *et seq.* See "La sconfita di Montaperto secondo il MS. di Niccolò di Giovanni di Francesco Ventura," in "Miscellanea Storica Sanese" (Siena, 1844).

"And when they beheld this, the Twenty-Four who ruled and governed the city of Siena forthwith assembled a council; and it was proposed to make a syndic who should have full pre-eminence and power and should embody in his own person the authority which belonged to the whole body of the citizens collectively; and that he should be empowered to give, grant, sell, and pledge Siena and its *contado* as to him might seem advisable.

"As if inspired by God, the said councillors by common consent chose for syndic a man of perfect and good life and of the best qualities which at that time could be found in Siena, by name Buonaguida Lucari. To him was given full and free authority and power, as much as had the whole body of the city, as is said above. And while this man was being elected syndic our spiritual father, Misser the Bishop, caused the bell to be rung to call together the clergy of Siena, priests, canons, and friars, and all the religious orders in the church of the Duomo of Siena. And all the clergy being gathered together as you have heard, Misser the Bishop spake briefly to those clerics who were there and said: '*Tantum est ministri Virginis Dei*,' &c. . . .

"Now while Misser the Bishop was making procession with his clergy in the Duomo, God by reason of the prayers of the clergy and of all good people who prayed to Him throughout the city—God, moved to compassion by the prayers of His Mother, suddenly put it in the heart of the syndic, namely, Buonaguida, to rise and speak as follows. Now he spake in so loud a voice that he was heard by those citizens who were without in the Piazza di S. Cristofano. 'As you Signori of Siena know, we have prayed the protection of King Manfred; now it appears to me that we should give ourselves, our goods and our persons, the city and the *contado* to the Queen of Life Eternal; that is, to our Lady Mother the Virgin Mary. To make this gift, may it please you all to bear me company.'

"As soon as he had said these words, Buonaguida stripped himself to his shirt, and barefooted and bareheaded, with a rope around his neck, came forth into the presence of all

those citizens, and in his shirt betook himself toward the Duomo. And all the people who were there followed him; and those whom he met upon his way went with him; and for the most part they were barefooted and without their cloaks, and no man had anything upon his head. And he went barefooted, repeating over and over: 'Glorious Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, aid us in our great need, that we may be delivered out of the hand of our enemies the Florentines—these lions who wish to devour us.' And all the people said: 'Madonna, Queen of Heaven, we entreat thy compassion.' And so they reached the Duomo.

"And Misser the Bishop went through the Duomo in procession. At the high altar, before our Lady, he began to sing *Te Deum Laudamus* in a loud voice. And as he began Buonaguida reached the door of the Duomo, with the people following him, and commenced to cry with a loud voice, '*Misericordia*'—the said Buonaguida and all the people—'*Misericordia*.' At which cry Misser the Bishop turned himself about with all the clergy and came to meet the said Buonaguida. When they were come together each man made reverence, and Buonaguida fell upon his face upon the ground. Misser the Bishop raised him up and gave him the kiss of peace; and so all those citizens kissed one another on the mouth. And this was at the lowest part of the choir of the Duomo.

"Then, holding one another by the hand, Misser the Bishop and Buonaguida went to the altar before our Mother the Virgin Mary, and kneeled down with great crying and continual tears. This Buonaguida remained stretched out upon the ground, and all the people and women with very great weeping and sobbing waited for the space of a quarter of an hour. Then Buonaguida alone raised himself upon his feet and stood erect before our Mother the Virgin Mary, and spake many wise and discreet words, among which were these: 'Gracious Virgin, Queen of Heaven, Mother of Sinners, to thee I, a miserable sinner, give, grant, and recommend this city and the *contado* of Siena. And I pray thee, Mother of Heaven, that

thou wilt be pleased to accept it, although to one so powerful as thou art it is but a little gift. And likewise I pray and supplicate thee to guard, free, and defend our city from the hands of our enemies, the Florentines, and from whosoever may desire to injure us or to bring upon us anguish and destruction.[1]

"These words being said, Misser the Bishop ascended into the pulpit and preached a very beautiful sermon, teaching the people of unity and exhorting them to love one another, to forgive those who had done them wrong, and to confess and communicate. And he entreated them to unite to place this city and their persons under the protection of the glorious Virgin Mary, and to go with him and with his clergy in procession.

"And in this procession, before them all, was carried the carven crucifix which stands in the Duomo, above the altar of S. Jacomo Interciso, beside the campanile.[1] Next followed all the monks and friars, and then came a canopy, and under the canopy was our Mother the Virgin Mary. Hard by was Misser the Bishop, and he was barefooted, and at his side was Buonaguida in his shirt and with a rope about his neck, as you have heard. Then followed all the canons of the Duomo, barefooted and bareheaded. They went singing holy psalms and litanies and prayers. And behind them came all the people, barefooted and uncovered, and all the women barefooted, and many with their hair dishevelled . . . saying *Paternosters* and *Ave Marias* and other prayers. . . .

"So they went in procession even to S. Cristofano and into the Campo, and returned to the Duomo, where they remained to confess and to receive the Sacrament, and to make peace one with another. And he who was the most injured sought out his enemy to make with him perfect and good accord. . . .

"Now these things befell on Thursday, the 2nd day of September. And nearly all night long the people thronged to

[1] The crucifix is said to be that which is to-day over the altar of the first chapel in the north transept. Heywood and Olcott, "Guide to Siena" (Torrini), p. 241.

confess and to make peace one with another. . . . And when morning was come the Twenty-Four who ruled and governed Siena sent three criers—into every Terzo one—proclaiming and crying: 'Valorous citizens, make ready! Arm yourselves! Take your perfect armour; and let each man in the name of our Mother the Virgin Mary follow his proper banner, ever recommending himself to God and to His Mother.'

"And hardly was the proclamation finished when all the citizens flew to arms. The father did not wait for the son, nor one brother for another; and so they went toward the Porta San Viene.[1] And thither came all the standard-bearers. The first was that of San Martino, first for reverence for the Saint, and also because that Terzo was near to the gate. The second was that of the City, with a very great army of people and well equipped. The third was the royal banner of Camollia, which represented the mantle of our Mother the Virgin Mary, and was all white and shining, fair and pure. Behind that banner came a great multitude of people, citizens, foot-soldiers, and horsemen; and with this company were many priests and friars, and some with weapons and some without, to aid and comfort the troops; and all were of good will, of one mind, and of one purpose, and well disposed against our enemies the Florentines, who with such vehemence had demanded things unrighteous and contrary to reason.

"Now, all the men having gone forth, those devout women who remained in Siena, together with Misser the Bishop and the clergy, commenced betimes on Friday morning a solemn procession with all the relics which were in the Duomo and in all the churches of Siena. . . . Thus they went all Friday, and all that day they fasted. When even was come they returned to the Duomo, and there they all knelt, and so remained while Misser the Bishop said litanies, with many prayers to the honour and glory of God and of His and our Mother. . . .

"And now we have told of Misser the Bishop, our spiritual

[1] *I.e.*, Porta Pispini.

father, and of the devout citizens and women, how they besought God and His Mother, Saint Mary, to give victory to the city of Siena and to its people, we will speak of the ordered legions of the army.

"The day commenced to break; and it was that blessed day, Friday, the 3rd of September, in the year aforesaid; so being drawn up in battle array they began their march towards the Bozzone. Ever the squadrons kept close together, that of the Captain of the Commune of Siena and that of Messer the Count Giordano. . . .[1] All went calling on the name of our Lord God and of his Mother the Virgin Mary, and to her they ever commended themselves, beseeching her to give them help and strength and courage and power against these wicked and perfidious Florentines. Thus praying they came to the foot of a hill which is called Poggio de' Ripoli, which hill was over against the camp of the Florentines."

That night the Sienese watched and prayed, and in the darkness there were seen over the Sienese camp as it were the mantle of the Blessed Virgin Mary for a sign of her protection. The battle broke with the daylight, and resulted, as we know, in the complete victory of the Sienese and their German allies—a victory they owed in large part to the Florentine Ghibelline, Bocca degli Abati, "that traitor Messer Bocca degli Abati," as Villani calls him, who struck Jacopo della Narda, who bore the Florentine standard, with his sword and cut off the hand with which he held the standard, and killed him. "And this done," Villani tells us, "the horsemen and people beholding the standard fallen, and that there were traitors among them, and that they were so strongly assailed by the Germans, in a short time were put to flight. . . . Thus was abased the proud arrogance of the ungrateful and proud people of Florence." "It was astonishing to see," writes the Sienese chronicler, "the great butchery that they made of those dogs of Florentines. . . . And the slaughter ever in-

[1] The Chronicle says little of the Germans, yet it was in a large degree to them and to the treason of Bocca degli Abati that the Sienese owed their victory.

creased, and so furious was the press that if one fell to earth he might by no means regain his feet again, but was trampled to death."

The account of dead and wounded varies. The Sienese tell us 10,000 were slain, and 20,000 were taken. Villani says 2,500 fell and 1,500 were captured. It is a matter of little consequence. Siena had won, and by her victory had once more raised the Ghibelline cause in Tuscany; her *contado* was hers to take, Florence itself was at her mercy.

Her triumph was shortlived. With incredible vacillation and weakness she allowed one strong man in the Council at Empoli that followed the battle to force her to spare Florence, which, if she had had a statesman worthy of the name, or a tradition worth following, would have been razed to the ground. Her opportunity had come, but she did not dare to seize it. She spared Florence, and in less than ten years the lily blossomed amid her ruin. She claimed dominion, and having too often failed in war, now that the Germans had given her victory she proved unworthy of it. Montaperto was but the splendid herald of an end too little glorious.

The battle of Montaperto ensured the immediate triumph of Ghibellinism throughout Tuscany; from every city the Guelfs were expelled, even from Lucca, and so far as Siena was concerned the treaty signed in November compelled Florence to renounce all her claims to Montalcino, Montepulciano, Campiglia, Staggia, and Poggibonsi, which Siena secured for herself. Her triumph, as I have said, like the triumph of Ghibellinism generally, was but shortlived. In 1261, and again in 1262, the Pope excommunicated her, and the withdrawal of papal patronage, though only partial, was a great and a shrewd blow at her predominance. Misfortunes were showered upon her. In 1266 Manfred was killed at Benevento; in 1268 Corradino, the last of the Hohenstaufen, was taken at Tagliacozzo and executed in Naples. The Ghibelline cause was dead; the battle of Colle in the following year, when Florence avenged Montaperto, was but its funeral; and when Henry VII, Dante's Emperor, entered Italy in 1310 it was but

its ghost that walked. That ghost, however, Siena was unable to greet. After Colle—was it to save her banks? —she had become Guelf, thus riveting the chains Florence had put upon her; while for the admirable government of the Twenty-Four she substituted the oligarchy of the Nine in its many forms. The rest of her political history is a long decadence,[1] helped on by poverty, plague, and the ever-growing domination of the Republic of Florence. What she achieved in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was not political but artistic, and as such we shall consider it. When at long last she fell actually into the hands of Grand-Duke Cosimo she was helplessly paralyzed, and all her protest was an hysterical flight, an almost painless weeping.

[1] See note 7, p. 326.

VIII

SIENA

THE PALAZZO PUBBLICO

WHAT the Piazza Signoria is to Florence, that, and something more, the Piazza del Campo is to Siena: it is at once the most beautiful and the most characteristic thing in the city. However one approaches it—and since it is set at the junction of the three hills on which Siena lies there are many ways of approach—it is always suddenly, with surprise one looks across that vast and beautiful space shaped like an open fan, enclosed on all sides by palaces, and radiating as it were from what one is often tempted, there at least, to proclaim the most beautiful palace in Tuscany, the Palazzo Pubblico, with its marvellous bell-tower soaring so adventurously, so confidently into the blue sky.

This piazza so spacious in form, so strange in its colour and loveliness, is, as it always has been, the heart of Siena. For work or for play, for council or for pleasure, in time of foreign war or civil riot, here the Sienese have always assembled. It was the market-place, the true piazza, the universal meeting-place of the city. But to-day it is almost deserted. One by one it has lost its uses till now but one remains to it: it is still a playground when, in August, on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the Palio is run there over the smooth bricks round the central space enclosed by the great pavement.

Then, indeed, one may see the Piazza in all its glory, almost as it must have been when, as Boccaccio tells us, Dante Alighieri "lay with his breast upon a bench" outside one of the

little shops—it was an apothecary's—reading an ancient book which had just been placed in his hand, and heard nothing of the great tournament that "was begun and carried through there," as now, with "a mighty din . . . and dances of fair ladies and sundry sports of youth."

But the Piazza is older far than Dante, as is the Palio. It was here on the day of our Lady of August, in 1224, after the fall of Grosseto, that "the Sienese for joy of the victory held high festival and lighted bonfires and closed the shops," while in 1260, after the Ghibelline victory of Montaperto, the men of Montalcino made there their submission before the *carroccio*, and were "accepted as subjects of the Magnificent Commune of Siena." And it is Dante himself who shows us the proud Provenzano Salvani there begging for alms to ransom his friend—

". . . Per trovar l' amico suo di pena."

There, too, later were set up the gambling booths "walled with branches," while in May, 1425, S. Bernardino preached there in the presence of the Signoria to a congregation of some forty thousand persons. And when Siena was dying it was there were held those splendid tournaments and jousts that were in fact her funeral games.

Nor is it only of such peaceful scenes as these that the Piazza has been a witness. It has seen much bloodshed and infinite cruelty. To name but two occasions: in October, 1285, the Sienese mob lynched five poor wretches there, and hanged other fifty-six "between Arbia and Bozzone"—this in the Guelf and Ghibelline quarrel. But even so short a time ago as the year 1799 nineteen Jews, men and women, were burned alive there at the suggestion of certain Aretine priests, and with the help of Napoleon's Tree of Liberty that had been set up before the Fonte Gaia a few months before.

But always, first and last, the Piazza was the market-place of the city; it began as just that, and it only ceased to fulfil this function in the year 1884.

Thus the Piazza del Campo was the heart of Siena in which

the whole life of the city, civil and religious, in war and in peace, was gathered and expressed: it is a heart that has almost ceased to beat.

A quietness but seldom broken now fills the Piazza with an exquisite peace. It is the only silent place, I think, in a city full of little noises beyond any other in Tuscany: the clang of metal on metal, the hammers of the coppersmiths that wake you so early, the plaintive cries high up among the old houses of innumerable swallows, the shouts of hawkers, the shrill voices of children, the songs and laughter and endless loud, free talk of a Latin people not yet dominated by the stupefying thunder of machines. And so to pass from any one of the narrow, echoing streets of the city into this beautiful desert is always to be suddenly alone—alone, and yet not alone, for out of this silence, actually golden for once where the sun seems to be enthroned, comes the voice of old Siena telling her wonderful tale.

It is with that tragedy in your heart that you turn at last to the Palazzo Pubblico. It is a building of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, added to in the fifteenth and again in the seventeenth, and its material is a beautiful and rich-coloured brick relieved in the window shafts by white marble. It is the first two stories of the central building which belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the upper story and the two wings being additions. Decorated with the Balzana, the black and white shield of Siena, in the midst of the façade are the arms of Grand-Duke Cosimo, whose lordship was the end of Siena as a free republic. Above is the beautiful monogram of Christ, set there by S. Bernardino; while over the door to the right is a statue, very small, of S. Ansano, a patron of the city, since he converted it in the fourth century, and beneath, on either side of the Lion of the People, the Wolf of Rome, which we find again on a pillar close by, marking the door as that of the Governors of the Republic as against that of the Podestà.

On the other side of the Palace, to the left of the main palace, is a building like a fine portico—in fact, a chapel—the Cappella della Piazza, set up by the Commune in fulfilment of

a vow made in the Black Death of 1348, in which some eighty thousand persons perished, and from which Siena never really recovered. Begun in 1352, it was finished, not easily, in 1376. About a century later, however, Antonio Federighi altered it, adding the whole of the upper structure with the frieze. The statues of the Apostles, only six of which were ever executed, are work, however, of the earlier time, and in their poverty of execution serve to remind us into what a state of decadence the plague had thrown the city.

Above the chapel soars the Torre, which was begun ten years before the Black Death, and was still unfinished when that awful pestilence depopulated the city. Begun by Minuccio and Francesco di Rinaldo of Perugia, it was continued by Agostino di Giovanni, while Lippo Memmi, the brother-in-law of Simone Martini, is said to have designed the crown.

There is something in the Torre del Mangia[1] that is peculiarly Sienese. Whereas in looking at Giotto's tower in Florence, like a tall lily beside the Duomo, we do in fact "consider the lilies of the field," their candid beauty and humility, here we are reminded of something fearless, daring, and adventurous, as though into this one perfectly expressive thing the very soul of Siena had passed—that soul which, mystical as it was beyond that of any other Tuscan city, was so often boastful too and unstable, a little hysterical in its strange spiritual loveliness, so that it too easily came to naught. Something of all this we find almost everywhere in the city, and especially perhaps in the great unfulfilled boast of the Duomo, but nowhere so subtilely and completely expressed as in this rose-coloured tower soaring over the roofs of Siena.

It is at the other extremity of the façade, by the second door, that one enters the ground floor of the Palace. Within are the remains of fourteenth-century frescoes, and on the ceiling, more than that, a fine figure of our Lord among Cherubim, surrounded by the four Evangelists, from the hand of Bartolo di Fredi. Leaving this threshold, one is led by the *custode*

[1] It is probably so called on account of the mechanical figure which used to strike the bells at the summit.

through various rooms. One sees a fresco of the Resurrection by Sodoma—and that will not detain us. Then in the Sala di Biccherna,[1] where the Provveditori, as the officials who presided in Biccherna—the Exchequer, as we might say—were called, we see one of the finest works of that fine painter, Sano di Pietro—surely his favourite subject, too, the Coronation of the Virgin. Painted in 1445, this exquisite fresco, so splendidly decorative, so altogether lovely, was contrived by Sano over the work of an earlier master, Lippo Vanni, whose signature still remains. Nor, as it happens, even so is the work altogether Sano's, for Domenico di Bartolo is said to have been the master who painted some of the chief figures, obviously not from Sano's hand. Close by is another work of Sano's, a figure of S. Bernardino of Siena. And just without the chamber is another, a damaged fresco of S. Pietro Alessandrino, Beato Ambrogio Sansedoni, and Beato Andrea Gallerani. And it is to Sano's work again we come—a head of S. Catherine—after passing through the Sala dei Matrimoni.

In the Sala di Anagrafe close by we find the splendid work of Vecchietta, a fresco, his finest work here in Siena, of the Madonna of Mercy guarding with her cloak the people of the city, who kneel about her feet. Above is a world of angels, and to the right S. Martin divides his cloak with the beggar by the way.

To reach the upper floors of the Palace it is necessary to return to the Piazza and to re-enter by the last door, beyond that by which we have come out. By this way we come at once to the second floor of the Palace.

Immediately on the right is the great Sala delle Balestre or del Mappamondo, which holds Simone Martini's huge fresco of the Virgin and Child enthroned under a splendid canopy upheld by SS. Peter, Paul, and the two SS. John, in the midst of a choir of saints and angels. Before Madonna Siena, her own city, kneels in the person of its patron saints, Ansano, Vittore, Crescenzio, and Savino, and the whole fresco is

[1] See W. Heywood, "A Pictorial Chronicle of Siena" (Siena, 1902), p. 16 *et seq.*

enclosed in a border of medallions and shields bearing the arms of the Commune and people.

This vast piece is at once like a tapestry and a huge miniature. It was painted in 1315, and restored by Simone himself, probably in 1320, when he renewed eight of the heads of the principal figures: to wit, S. Ansano, the two angels offering flowers, S. Crescenzio, S. Catherine, the saintly woman opposite to her, and the Virgin and Child. It has in parts been restored at various later times, but substantially remains the very beautiful work of one of the most delightful of Sienese painters, and, indeed, the earliest of his works.

The mastery that is perhaps only promised in this great work has been achieved in the splendid equestrian portrait of Guidoriccio da Fogliano by the same artist on the opposite wall. It seems to have been finished before it was begun, so certain is it of itself and so confident in every gesture are that horse and its rider. Guidoriccio, the "Captain of war in Siena," is riding out of the Sienese camp to the siege of Montemassi. In the background we see one of those *Battifolle*, those strange ramparts and towers of wood which in those days one constructed when one besieged a town. But that is merely a curiosity of archæology. What strikes us most in this splendid work is the immortal gesture of life which it expresses as surely as any work by Titian or Velasquez could do. Nor is it without a certain dramatic quality, poetical and beautiful—that imposing figure so full of almost regal dignity thrown against the dark sky, its irresistible advance, its proud gesture of absolute command and certainty. And with this, like a true Sienese, Simone has contrived that his work should be not merely realistic but perfectly decorated: even here, if you will, you have but a pattern of colours on the wall, a sudden glance of light, a miraculous gift of the sun.

Under this portrait hangs the so-called Guido da Siena, a Madonna which bears the date 1221. The picture is perhaps less genuine than the signature, which has excited numberless suspicions. On either side of it are frescoes by Sodoma of two of the patrons of Siena—S. Ansano, baptizing the Sienese,

Simone Martini *Palazzo Pubblico Siena*

GUIDORICCIO DA FOGLIANO

(FRESCO)

and S. Vittore, and the Blessed Bernardo Tolomei, who founded the Olivetan congregation. Happily they are among his better and more virile works, and do not disgust us in the presence of Simone.

On the long side wall are two almost anonymous battle-scenes in monochrome. The finer, to the left, represents the victory of the Sienese at Torrita in 1363, when Messer Ceccolo degli Orsini of Rome, in command of the Sienese, attacked against the orders of the magistrates. The other shows us the battle of Poggio Imperiale, near Poggibonsi, fought more than a hundred years later, in 1479, when Siena, after the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy, sided with the Pope and the King of Naples against Florence and Milan, and won this victory under the Duke of Calabria.

Leaving the Sala delle Balestre we pass into the Sala dei Nove, the Hall of the Nine, or, as it was later called, the Sala della Pace. And here we are in the presence of Ambrogio Lorenzetti, whose famous frescoes, completed in 1339, cover three of its walls. It is with the results of Good and of Bad Government that he deals. The best preserved of these works is that opposite the window; unhappily a door cuts off a part of its right corner.

Above, high up on the left, we see a half figure of Wisdom hovering, crowned and wearing a veil. In her left hand is a red book, in her right she holds a huge balance, whose beam rests on the head of Justice, who looks up into the eyes of Wisdom as though for inspiration. In the scales to the left is a winged angel, who bends to decapitate a kneeling man, and places a crown on the head of one who prays. From the scale to the right another angel leans and dips one hand into a box held by a kneeling figure, while he gives a lance and a sword to another, kneeling too. This obscure and confused allegory would appear to express distributive Justice inspired by Wisdom dealing out death to the wicked and benediction to the good; while commutative Justice aids one with money and another with weapons. It matters little to us, perhaps, what the meaning may be. We

are consoled for our dullness by the delight we feel at that figure of Justice, one of the finest efforts of Sienese art.

But I have not half described the picture. Beneath the figure of Justice sits Concord, scarcely less noble, holding in her left hand two cords, which are tied around the waists of the angels in the scales. One is red, the other white. These cords she passes to a small personage near by, who hands them on to his neighbour, who does the like, a procession of twenty-four persons being thus formed which advances to the vast throne on the right whereon is seated the Commune of Siena —a splendid figure of a man in middle age, who holds in the right hand a sceptre, in the left a seal or disk bearing the image of the Blessed Virgin, the Protectress and Liege Lady of the city. Above the throne hover figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and to its right and left are seated those marvellous figures of Prudence, Fortitude, Peace, Magnanimity, Temperance, and Legal Justice : Peace being indeed, as she is, the most lovely of them all. Beneath the throne are the Wolf and Romulus and Remus, and armed men on foot and horseback and others offering tribute, and again others bound in fetters. The allegory would seem to suggest that if Justice inspired by Wisdom be followed she will induce Concord, which in her turn will lead men to live in fellowship under the benign sway of the Commune of Siena, supported by Prudence, Fortitude, Peace, and their sisters.

And this lesson is emphasised in the two frescoes to right and left. That on the right shows us the effect of Good Government. In the city all is gay and prosperous ; girls dance the *rigoletto*, knights and their fair ladies ride joyfully through the streets, while without we see a smiling countryside full of happiness, and peasants who bring their produce to the city gate. Over all abides Security, with a scroll and a gallows.

On the left wall we see the effects of Bad Government, under the monstrous figure of Tyranny, whose left foot rests on a goat. Above are Greed, Pride, and Vainglory ; and beside him Fraud, Treason, Cruelty, Fury, Division, and War.

Beneath, Justice is cast down and bound, while in the city murder and rapine walk the streets, and without the fields are bare; and over all abides Fear half-naked, a drawn sword in her hand.

The allegory here is sufficiently obvious. It is a pity that the decorative value of these frescoes is not so fine as the detail which their didactic purpose demanded.

To reach the chapel it is necessary first to return to the Sala del Mappamondo, out of which it opens. It is for the sake of Taddeo Bartoli one comes here, who began to paint in the chapel in 1407. The work in the antechapel—those allegorical frescoes—was done seven years later. The frescoes in the chapel itself consist of the figures of various saints and of four scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin—her Farewell, her Death, her Funeral, and her Assumption. In the last, which is the best of his works here, we see against the glow of the sunset the city of Siena in all her delicate beauty.

Taddeo di Bartolo was born in 1363. The pupil of a feeble master, Bartolo di Fredi, he was at twenty-two years of age employed in the Duomo, but his best work in Siena was not done till at over forty years of age he began these frescoes, and painted in 1409 the great Annunciation now in the Belle Arti, and in 1413 the polyptych of the Osservanza, finishing both the latter while he was engaged on the frescoes in the chapel and antechapel here in the Palazzo Pubblico. Between his employment in 1385 in the Duomo and his work here, begun in 1407, he had been something of a traveller. In 1390 he was in Pisa, in 1393 in Genoa, in 1395 in Pisa again, where, indeed, he remained for some years, painting in S. Francesco. In 1400 and 1401, however, we find him in Montepulciano at work on the Last Judgment in the Duomo there, where he contrived his great reredos, consisting of the Annunciation, the Coronation, and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. In 1403 he went to Perugia, after briefly visiting Siena, where he worked in S. Francesco and S. Agostino, and, according to Vasari, in S. Domenico, where he painted some frescoes of the life of S. Catherine. He had,

therefore, seen something of the world and of the art of Tuscany when, in 1405, he returned to his native city ; and two years later, as we have seen, began to work in the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico.

Passing from the chapel through the Sala dei Cardinali, where hang a panel of the Virgin and Child with Angels by Cozzarelli, dated 1484, and two small pictures of scenes in the life of S. Bernardino by Vecchietta, we come to the Sala della Balia, which Spinello Aretino in his old age, with the assistance of his son, painted with scenes from the life of the Sienese Pope, Alexander III. It was Caterino Corsino, Operaio of the Duomo of Siena, who in 1404 persuaded Spinello Aretino to forsake Arezzo and to come to Siena to work there. The work of foreign artists is so rare in Siena that we cannot but notice these frescoes. Spinello and his son Parri arrived in Siena in October, 1404, and laboured there till the end of the summer of 1405. For eleven months they worked in the Duomo, but nothing is left to us of all their labour. They returned to Florence, but two years later, in March, 1407–8, they returned to Siena to paint these frescoes of the Sala di Balia, in company with Martino di Bartolommeo, who worked on the ceiling.

Spinello's frescoes, in painting which he was doubtless much assisted by his son, are concerned really with the heroic story of the Venetian campaign against Frederick Barbarossa : in this campaign legend assigns to Orlando Bandinelli, later Pope Alexander III, an heroic share. So successful are these frescoes in composition, colour, and movement that they may stand as the masterpiece of a man who was not the least among the better followers of Giotto. And, in fact, where else in work of that time shall we find the living splendour of the scene representing a naval fight, or the grace of that in which the Pope arms the Doge surrounded by his guard, or the triumphant joy of that in which we see the victorious Pope, his mule led by the humbled Emperor ?

From the Sala di Balia we enter a corridor, where at the end is that unique thing, a fresco by Neroccio—of the Virgin

A. Lorenzetti *Palazzo Pubblico, Siena*

PEACE: DETAIL OF FRESCO IN SALA DELLA PACE

and Child enthroned. Hence we climb to the top floor of the Palace, where after all the best of all awaits us—not the great ruined fresco of the Virgin and Child there by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, but the very world itself, the vast *contado* of Siena, hill and valley and desert stretching away to where, in the evening mist, maybe, the pure, serene outline of Mont' Amiata rises into the sky on the verge of the Patrimony, on the confines of Umbria, on the road to Rome. He who has once seen that majesty will never forget it. It seems to seal every one of the days one spends in Siena, or in the little cities to the south that were once her vassals. From here you may count them all: only you will not. You will look only at that mountain whose crest, shaped like the crescent moon, bears as of right the symbol of Mary, and in silence you will await the sunset. And as the bells once more, as of old, ring the Angelus, you will remind yourself, perhaps after many days of forgetfulness, of those things which alone have any reality—

"Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum:
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui
Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen."

IX

SIENA

CATHEDRAL GROUP

THE Piazza del Duomo of Siena differs both from that of Florence and from that of Pisa, for it is neither the centre of the life of the city like the former, nor a thing apart, a mere or a meadow of faery like the latter; yet it has the silence of Pisa and the domination of Florence. Set on what may well be the highest point of the triune hill on which Siena stands, and which is made one in the Piazza del Campo, the Cathedral of S. Maria Assunta dominates the whole city, casting its shadow over it at sunrise and at sunset; yet it is withdrawn, surrounded by silence, and separate altogether from those narrow streets so full of noise and business, in which, nevertheless, everywhere its presence may be felt. It is, in fact, and in a more particular sense than in any other cathedral in the world, the votive shrine erected by the people of Siena to their guardian and liege lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It is a citadel, too, in which long and long ago Siena placed all her hope, her pride, and her love. However you may come to it, whether by the Via di Città and the Via del Capitano from the Campo, or by the Via del Fosso di S. Ansano from the Porta Laterina, or by the steps or by the Via del Poggiolo from the Piazza di S. Giovanni, you must go up, you must climb to that sunlit piazza which surrounds this shrine always with so mysteriously dazzling a space of silence.

And this quietness, so grateful to us of the modern world,

who live perforce continually in a kind of hideous and useless noise, has the colour of fire and of gold—the whiteness of fire, the golden splendour of gold.

As you come into the Piazza up the steps from the Piazza di S. Giovanni, beside you on your right stretches the whole length of the nave of the Cathedral, on your left rises the great palace of the Opera; beside it opens a long piazza, set here and there with numerous arches of white marble that look like ruins. Before you, closing another larger piazza, rises the golden white Ospedale di S. Maria della Scala, and everywhere around you is a vast and beautiful space full of the sun.

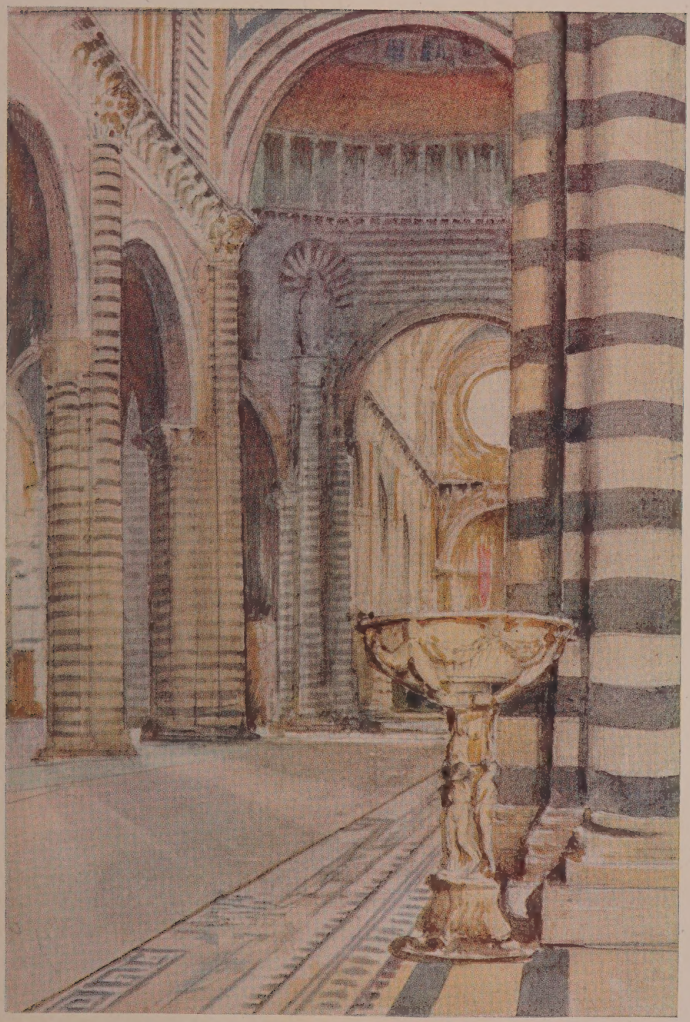
All this has in it something of a miracle. It is only when, having crossed that sunlit space, you turn before the Ospedale to face the Cathedral, that you are aware of a sudden disappointment.

In so many of the cathedrals of Italy the façade has little or no relation to the church which lies behind it; and here in Siena it might seem we have the most flagrant example of this fault. The façade of the Duomo of Orvieto, it is true, errs in the same way, though not so manifestly, for there at least the noble central door, so much larger than its fellows on either side, emphasises the importance of the nave over the aisles, while here the three doors are of equal height. But this is by no means the only cause of Siena's inferiority. As a façade pure and simple, that of Orvieto is noble and lovely in design, in decoration, and in colour. That of Siena is feeble in design, it suffers from too much decoration, and this of a mean sort; and who but a fanatic can admire its colour? It fails everywhere in comparison with the work of Orvieto—it fails in order and in beauty. And if in its completeness it may not be compared with its sister at Orvieto, it fails, too, in its detail. At Orvieto sculpture has, with very happy effect, been more sparingly used, but what there is, is of a better and nobler kind. And this was the result of the decline of the Pisan school. The only really satisfactory church builders in Italy before the fifteenth century, the Pisans,

possessed, too, the only school of sculpture. When Lorenzo del Maitano, the pupil of Giovanni Pisano, designed the façade of Orvieto, the Pisan influence was still living; he worked mainly in relief. But when fifty years later, perhaps under French influence, the Pisan tradition was waning, the façade of Siena was decorated not in relief, but with a host of figures whose effect, so splendid in the grey stone of Chartres, is almost grotesque in the dazzling marble of Siena. Nor is this all. At Orvieto we find the façade clothed with mosaic, while at Siena only the gables have any colour. Thus structurally, in design also, and in colour it is a failure, lacking in a due sense of proportion, in order, and in repose, so that what effectiveness it has—and no one can deny it a certain element of surprise, and even wonder—soon wearies us, till we come to disregard it altogether as a mere ineffectual boast, a thing without sincerity or joy, set for pride before the church of Madonna. And since the façade has, in fact, so little relation to the church it hides, let us consider that church without it.

This hill on which the Cathedral stands, according to tradition, has always been sacred to some deity. And even as it is said that on the holy island of Thorney, where our Abbey now stands in Westminster, there was once a temple of Apollo, so here, where now rises this church of the Madonna Assunta, there once stood a temple to Minerva. Pecci, the old Sienese historian, tells us that the first Christian building was erected here in the eighth or ninth century, when it became the centre of religion in Siena, for the earlier Cathedral had stood in Castelvecchio. In the twelfth century, too, we hear that the Sienese Pope, Alexander III, consecrated the second church upon this hill. But the building we now see belongs to the thirteenth century.

It was begun, according to Malavolti, in 1245, and in the following year we have documentary evidence that money was being spent on it. In 1257 we know that a certain monk of S. Galgano, a Cistercian, was Operaio here, and two years later was succeeded by another monk of the same monastery, a



SIENA : DUOMO—INTERIOR

certain Melano. He repaired the work of his predecessors, and added to it, and in 1266 Niccola Pisano came to Siena to set up within its walls his great pulpit. The Cathedral, shorter than the building we see by two bays, was finished, with the exception of the façade and the present choir, in the following year.

In those very years almost our Abbey of Westminster was built by Henry III. It was in 1220 that he began the new Lady chapel, and a little later set about rebuilding the whole church. In 1260, two years after the dedication of the Cathedral of Siena, Westminster Abbey was consecrated. So did the Sienese, and so the English.

But it is ill comparing work so essentially different. If we may not name the Cathedral of Siena in the same breath with the Abbey, it is not only because the Italians were poor at construction, and expressed themselves less perfectly in stone; it is because one may not compare two essentially different things. The Italians were poor at construction: let us admit it. Here in Siena, as elsewhere, we read of the repairs which had to be made in the fabric owing to the lack of constructive skill. But it is impossible to deny that they were able to express themselves perfectly in Architecture as in Literature, Sculpture, and Painting. Only when we consider any work of art it is necessary to remember the intention of the artist and the demands his material made upon him; and the latter is not less, but perhaps more, important than the former.

The aim of every Latin builder has always been to express light and space; this was a condition of his noble climate, and it was his priceless inheritance from the Romans. For this purpose he had at hand two materials—brick and marble. So long as the Roman tradition was indeed living in the hearts of men, so long as the round arch endured, space and light were the natural aims of a builder, space everywhere, and light where light was to be had. But when the northern soul was born where light, serene, pure, and spacious light, was not to be had at all, or to be had only rarely; where marble was not to be found, but where stone might be won from the

always far-away hills, a new aim, a new intention was born into the world. The Gothic style, as we loosely call it, the pointed style, the style that has as its essentials height and vast traceried and coloured windows, was born in the Île de France. It disregarded space, for space was everywhere about it, and light—the light of Italy—was not to be had. What was needed in the great plains of Northern Europe, where there are no mountains, was height and the effect of height—the dim, far-away arches, the steep roofs, the vast height and the effect of height we find in a Gothic church, and the glory of light that takes its fire and colour, not from the pale sky, but from the burning glass of the tall, narrow windows. Out of these needs was born the Gothic style.

Now conceive this emotion, this idea, this style gradually brought to the consciousness of the South, of Italy. The result could not but be a disaster. Out of Lombardy there are no plains in Italy; everywhere there are mountains. Height was not needed. There is no height, there never has been, in the buildings of Rome, because when we lift up our eyes we may see the hills; but consider what London has become without the effect of it; nay, consider what beauty London must have held when she had it, as she once had, when, in fact, she was a Gothic city.

But this Gothic emotion, so admirable and so wonderfully lovely in its result in the North, was not to be denied in the South either, where, in fact, it was a disaster. There, where everywhere there was height and colour and outline, one began to forsake the old manner for this new desire, which, there, can have been nothing more than an affectation and a farce. And to complicate what was already far from easy to understand or to feel in the sun—indeed, the Italian never did understand the principles of Gothic construction — the builder had to achieve his end, not with the grey stone of the North, so full of harmony with the grey sky there and the long winter, but with warm brick or with marble. So that if his aim was the same as that of the builders of Chartres or Amiens or Westminster, he had to achieve it with a dazzling white

or black or rosy marble that reflected the southern light, already overpowering, and on which every crocket and tracery spread a lacework of black shadows. The result was a foregone failure—in fact, the aim was never achieved save at Milan, where the vast plains of Lombardy help to hide the grotesque effect as of a bride cake that the sun and the marble mountains had forced a Gothic cathedral to become in the south. Italian architecture only came to its own again when the Renaissance returned to Rome with the round arch.

If, then, one is disappointed—and who is not disappointed?—in the front of the Cathedral of Siena, it is because it is built with much of the intention of Gothic architecture, with more of that intention than is to be found in any other cathedral, I think, south of the Apennines, with more, certainly, than is discernible at Florence, where the effect is very noble indeed, and, in fact, almost successful.

Who the architect may have been who designed this church we shall never know. At any rate he was very far from understanding the art of the French builders. As I have said, his constructive ability was as weak as was that of most Italian builders of his time, and his love of decoration, of the rich effect of different-coloured marbles, was altogether at variance with the style in which he had chosen or was compelled to work. Thus the church, completed in 1267, was rather astonishing than lovely, rather a *tour de force* than a work of art.

That the work was a failure seems to have been realized by the Sienese within fifty years of its achievement. The Cathedral of Florence promised to be not only larger, but more beautiful than theirs; and Orvieto, too, was already at work. They began by adding here and there to the church. They pulled down the old baptistery which stood to the right of the façade, and in 1315 built the new baptistery we know to the east, and beneath the Duomo. At the same time they began a choir above the bapistery, whose roof served as floor for it. But before they had gone far with the work, in 1322 it was pronounced to be unstable by

Lorenzo del Maitano, the great Sienese who was Operaio at Orvieto. It was then proposed to build a new church, "beautiful, large, and splendid, fine in its proportions of length, height, and breadth, and in all its parts." This scheme, as may be imagined, was strongly opposed by those who wished only to add to the old church. Their party was in power, and remained in power till 1339, when Maitano's scheme was at last adopted, and a vast church planned, of which the old building—the present church—was to form the transepts. Lando di Pietro, the Sienese architect, then in the employment of King Robert of Naples, was recalled, and the first stone of the great new nave was laid in February, 1340.

But the work then begun soon proved beyond the power or the wealth of Siena, for it soon proved to be impossible to use the old church at all. It was necessary to build this vast temple entirely anew from the foundations. The work proceeded apace even in spite of the Plague of 1348. But it was that which killed it at last, for it half-depopulated Siena. The merchants were ruined, the city divided against itself, the energies which should have gone to the building of the Cathedral were absorbed by the struggle for existence or the petty and bitter politics of the factions. Then it was discovered that certain fatal defects in construction were already declaring themselves in what had been begun of the new building. Florentine architects were called in. They found the piers too light for the vast vaults, and advised a reconstruction. When this was known the Operaio, the Sienese Domenico d' Agostino, advised that the old Cathedral should be allowed to remain, and that the choir above S. Giovanni should be finished; and though he by no means abandoned hope of finishing the new Cathedral, he asserted that it would take a hundred years to build.

In 1357 the unsafe parts of the new building were removed. The great days of Siena were over, and the new church was then tacitly abandoned.

Meanwhile work proceeded on the old Cathedral. In 1370 the choir was finished, and in the same year the piazza before

the church was enlarged by the removal of the loggia of the Bishop's palace.[1] In 1374 it was decided to lengthen the nave by two bays, and these were finished in 1377, when Bartolommeo di Tommé and other sculptors began to work on the façade. By 1380 or 1381 the façade, which had been inspired by the greatest work of the Sienese sculptor, Lorenzo del Maitano, at Orvieto, was finished. The beautiful eastern façade was then taken in hand, and built after a design by Giacomo di Mino di Neri del Pelliciaio.

A hundred years later Giovanni di Stefano built the small baptistery in the north transept. In 1495 the Piccolomini Library was added, and the only addition made to the Cathedral since then is the Cappella del Voto in the south transept, which was added by Alexander VII in 1661.

If one is always disappointed with the façade of the Cathedral, what is one's final impression of the interior? At first certainly you are bewildered and confused by those bands of black and white marble which so unfortunately diminish the spaciousness of what is, after all, a very spacious building; they halve its height and breadth and rob it of its dignity. But when, if ever, you have become accustomed to this oddity, you recognise that what charms you in a building full of contradictions is that in it which carries out the idea of all Latin building, an effect, yes, in spite of every sort of handicap, an effect of light and space, not so splendid certainly as you will find in such masterpieces as the Cathedrals of Pisa and Lucca or in the Church of S. Croce in Florence, but light and space nevertheless, here where the fundamental feeling is rather Romanesque than Gothic, the predominating lines horizontal rather than perpendicular; and the decorations of the church, mainly of the Renaissance as they are, confirm the impression we receive from the building itself.

But if the Cathedral of Siena as a building pure and simple holds its own hardly with its sisters of Pisa, Lucca, and Florence, it compares very favourably with any one of them

[1] *Cf.* R. Langton Douglas, "A History of Siena" (Murray, 1902), p. 279 and App. i.

in regard to the treasures it possesses. The very pavement is a work of art, one of the most notable in the city, and, indeed, unique in Italy. It was the labour of centuries. Begun before the close of the fourteenth century, it was still incomplete when the sixteenth was half passed away. Among the masters who designed subjects for this extraordinary mosaic are found Giovanni di Stefano, Federighi, Domenico di Bartoli, Benvenuto di Giovanni, Matteo di Giovanni, Neroccio, Cozzarelli, Pintoricchio, Beccafumi, and probably Francesco di Giorgio.[1] This wonderful pavement is spread like the richest of carpets down the length of the nave.

We come upon the lovely work of Federighi again at the very entrance to the nave in two holy-water basins, and on that of Neroccio, always so full of charm, in the tomb of Bishop Tommaso Piccolomini (1483), in the south aisle, close to the door of the Campanile. Beneath are bas-reliefs by Urbano da Cortona, another of the "pavement masters," representing scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin.

Close by is the Cappella del Voto, added, as I have said, in 1661. The building of this chapel closed the ancient and famous Porta del Perdono. It was built as a shrine for the ancient Madonna del Voto, "she who hearkened unto the people of Siena what time the Florentines were routed at Montaperto," and who, according to Mr. Heywood and the Sienese, is still full of miracles. She is invoked by the city or the peasants of the *contado* to-day chiefly in the matter of the weather. Mr. Heywood[2] recounts from his own experience how the mere unveiling of our Lady saved Siena from flood in 1902 when Rome was drowned. But a later story I have heard would seem to the profane, or at least to a Florentine, to throw some doubt on the present efficacy of the Advocata Senensium. For it was told me that not long since the whole Senese was suffering from drought, and this for so long a time that at last

[1] It is impossible here to enter into the details of this extraordinary and detailed work. The reader is referred to the excellent handbook of Mr. R. H. Hobart Cust, "The Pavement Masters of Siena."

[2] "A Pictorial Chronicle of Siena" (Torrini, Siena, 1902), p. 64.

the peasants demanded that the Madonna del Voto should be unveiled. Their priests besought leave of the Archbishop, who shook his head. "*Pazienza*," says he, "*pazienza miei figliuoli!*" Doubtless it is easier to prate of patience in the Episcopal Palace of Siena than to ensue it as you watch your vines die in the *contado*. However that may be, the peasants sent again to the Archbishop, who, tapping his new aneroid barometer, gravely shook his head. "Unveil her if you must," says he, "but if you do you will make a fool of your Madonna." It was only when at last the glass began to fall that with the greatest readiness he gave consent, saying, "Unveil her now if you will, for she will certainly hear the cries of her children."

Now whether or no she has fallen as low as that I am ignorant; but that the Madonna del Voto has played a great part in the story of Siena is not to be gainsaid. It was to her on the eve of Montaperto, when Siena was in great fear of her life, not foreseeing her victory, that Buonaguida the Syndic, "stripped to his shirt, barefooted and bareheaded, with a rope around his neck, came forth into the presence of all the citizens, and in his shirt betook himself to the Duomo." There, before the Madonna del Voto, in the presence of the Bishop and all the people of Siena, he dedicated the city to the Blessed Virgin, saying: "Gracious Virgin, Queen of Heaven, Mother of Sinners, to thee I, a miserable sinner, give, grant, and recommend this city and the *contado* of Siena. And I pray thee, Mother of Heaven, that thou wilt be pleased to accept it, although to one so powerful as thou art it is but a little gift. And likewise I pray and supplicate thee to guard, free, and defend our city from the hands of our enemies the Florentines, and from whosoever may desire to injure us or to bring upon us anguish and destruction."[1] Thus Siena was dedicated to the Virgin, and this so wholly and entirely that it is said the white and black striped marble of

[1] See W. Heywood, "Palio and Ponte" (Methuen, 1904), p. 31. There followed a "very beautiful sermon" from Messer the Bishop, and a procession from one church to another. I repeat the facts here for the sake of the reader, see *supra*, pp. 85 *et seq.*

the Duomo, the Balzana, the black and white banners of the Commune, are but emblems of her purity and humility, or of those joyful and sorrowful mysteries whereby, as she told S. Bridget, "her life was ever divided between happiness and grief." [1]

Four times besides was the city rededicated—in 1483 when she was threatened by the exiles, in 1526 before the battle of Camollia, in 1550 when the Spaniards were at hand, and again in 1555 when Charles V and Cosimo I were about to put an end to her independence.

In 1260, at the time of the first dedication, the high altar still stood beneath the cupola, and over it was set Duccio's great Majestas, that, alas! is now imprisoned in the Opera del Duomo. It was not before this marvellous altarpiece, however, that Buonaguida knelt, but before the Madonna del Voto, then in the Cappella di S. Bonifazio.

The present high altar was set up in the sixteenth century, and in a new place. Upon it now stands Vecchietta's splendid bronze tabernacle, while on either side kneel Giovanni di Stefano's angels, and below them the lovelier statues of Francesco di Giorgio. No praise can be too fine for them. Around them, against the columns, is the work of Beccafumi in bronze.

In the right transept we come upon the monument of him who built the Cappella del Voto—Alexander VII, Fabio Chigi—beside that of another and earlier Sienese Pope, Alexander III.

Turning now to the sacristy, we find there two panels of S. Bernardino; in one, by Sano di Pietro, he is preaching before the Palazzo Pubblico. The picture of the Madonna is by Pacchiarotto.

But the finest and most interesting work of art in the Cathedral is the pulpit by Niccolò Pisano. He received the order for this splendid work on Michaelmas Day, 1265, and, thanks to the help of Arnolfo and his son Giovanni and others, he was able to begin it on 1 March, 1266, and to complete it

[1] *Cf.* W. Heywood, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

in November, 1268. The plan is the same as that for the pulpit in the Baptistery of Pisa, but the work is richer and more clairvoyant. Octagonal in form, it possesses two more bas-reliefs than the pulpit of the Pisan baptistery, namely, the Massacre of the Innocents and a second scene of the Last Judgment. But in every relief we find a more dramatic life and an art more naturalistic than in the earlier work. It is a masterpiece a little uncertain of itself, perhaps, but full of a new promise of joy. The unfortunate addition of the steps was made by Riccio at the end of the sixteenth century.

Close to the pulpit is the Cappella di S. Ansano. Within is the magnificent bronze tomb of Bishop Pecci, made in 1426 by Donatello. It is a triumph of technique, exquisite in workmanship and colour, keeping about it too, in spite of the worn surface, a sense of calm and repose not always to be found in Donatello's monuments.

The north transept holds nothing of interest, but the Cappella di S. Giovanni next to it was built by Giovanni di Stefano, and within there is a reliquary containing, as it is said, an arm of John Baptist, presented to Siena by Pius II. What, however, will no doubt detain us longer is the magnificent statue of the saint by Donatello. Very close to the statues of the same saint, which are now in Venice and Berlin, and having much in common with the wonderful Magdalen of the Baptistery at Florence, the S. John of Siena is an embodiment of that voice crying in the wilderness which seems to have haunted Donatello so persistently. On either side is a statue of S. Ansano and S. Catherine of Alexandria, the one a feeble work by Giovanni di Stefano, the other a wonderful but unfinished masterpiece by Neroccio. This chapel was the smaller baptistery, and the font is notable: its reliefs are the work of Federighi, and are concerned with Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden—the garden of the Hesperides, it seems, for two labours of Hercules close the series. On the walls are frescoes by Pintoricchio and his pupils, representing Alberto Aringhieri as a young knight keeping vigil, and as a knight of Rhodes. Opposite is the

Birth of the Baptist. The two frescoes over the door are the work of Peruzzi.

The Piccolomini family, one of whose sons, Pius II, gave its relic to the chapel of S. Giovanni, has its monument in the north aisle at the fourth altar, the framework of which was designed by Andrea Bregno (1485). Four of the statues which adorn it are said to be from the hand of Michelangelo, namely, S. Peter, S. Paul, Pius, and S. Gregory. Fine as they are, they but doubtfully come from the hand of the great Florentine.

Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini, who commissioned this altar, built also the famous Libreria, close by, to hold the manuscripts left him by his uncle, Pius II. The Library is, then, really a monument to the great humanist Pope who canonized S. Catherine of Siena. The bronze doors were made by Antoniolo Ormanni. Over them is a fine fresco by Pintoricchio of the Coronation of Cardinal Francesco as Pius III. Within are the ten splendid frescoes of the life of Pius II by Pintoricchio.

Pius II was born in 1405. He was an adventurer of fine character, but an adventurer. He had no great convictions, but, unlike so many who are without them, he was capable of learning from experience. And then, if he was without convictions, he was also without prejudices. He made the most of life in no vulgar way, but with a success that proves his superiority. He was not one to mould the world, but to use it and to enjoy it nobly. His early life is said to have been disorderly. He wrote much sensuous and even licentious verse, and a novel that might have come from the hand of Boccaccio in a moment of ennui. At twenty-six he became secretary to the Bishop of Fermo at the Council of Basle. There he made his reputation, and in the years between 1432 and 1435 he was employed on missions in England, Scotland, and Germany. He then followed Frederic III, reformed his life, took Orders, reconciled himself to the Pope, and was created Bishop of Trieste, and, returning to Italy in 1456, he became Cardinal of Siena. On the death of Calixtus III, two

years later, he was elected Pope, and, in reference to his name of Æneas, took the title of Pius II. His reign was disappointing; it revealed his want of conviction and his opportunism. Instead of forming that confederation of Europe against the Turks which was the most essential duty of Christendom at the time, he wasted himself, his eloquence—which was considerable—and his material power—which was small—in breaking the unruly barons of the Romagna and the Marche, and with a petty personal spite quite unworthy of him, and, indeed, unlike him, burnt Sigismondo Malatesta in effigy in Rome. The effort to regain Constantinople, worthy of all his energy, came to nothing, and, as though in remorse for his failure, we see him at last, feeble and suffering, borne to Ancona on a litter to bless and encourage the half-hearted and belated Crusade. There he died in August, 1464. Looking back on his life now, it is as a scholar and a humanist he chiefly appeals to us. His Commentaries are full of human pages and a real love of Nature that in the men of his day was only to be found again in Lorenzo de' Medici and Leon Alberti. He was a mixture more strange than rare, of weakness and strength, of a vanity and an idealism truly Sienese. He erred, but he did not deceive himself; he did not try to make himself out nobler than he was; and for his sincerity and his frankness we respect him, so that his very inconsistencies come at last to seem the most real things about him, and his thoughts about life, so plentifully recorded, really spontaneous impressions, are valuable to us on that account. And last, but not least, he had the courage of his opinions—he canonized S. Catherine.

The frescoes which Pintoricchio painted to illustrate Pius' life begin on the right with that in which we see him starting for the Council of Basle with Cardinal Capranica. In the second we see him at the Court of James I of Scotland. Later he is crowned poet-laureate by Frederic III; as envoy of the Emperor he meets Pope Eugenius IV; as Bishop he is present at the meeting of the Emperor and of Eleonora of Portugal, his betrothed, outside the Porta Camollia; he is

made Cardinal by Calixtus III; he is elected Pope; he attends the Congress he had summoned at Mantua to promote a Crusade against the Turks; he canonizes S. Catherine; he is borne to Ancona to bless the Crusade.

Full as these works are of the petty detail that Pintoricchio loved, they are redeemed even from their faults of composition, even from their feebleness of structure, even from their lack of life, by the spaciousness of their landscape and the charm of their thousand incidents. They are a complete decoration to the room, though not perhaps a really splendid one, and they remain the masterpiece of the artist and one of the brightest and most harmonious works of the Renaissance.

Leaving the Duomo at last for the spaciousness and light of the Piazza on our way to the Opera del Duomo, we pass under the beautiful Romanesque Campanile that is so splendid and so lofty a feature in any view of the city. It is a work of the first half of the fourteenth century.

Among the many fragments that go to make up the museum of the Opera, fragments from the façade of the Duomo, fragments from the Duomo pavement, and I know not what else, it is, after all, to that room on the third floor which holds Duccio's broken Majestas that we shall return again and again. Before this marvellous altarpiece one often wonders whether this was not the greatest thing Siena ever accomplished in the world of action, in the world of art, in the world of the intellect. It alone, at any rate, endures for ever.

Duccio was born about 1255, and already in 1278 he was employed as a painter by the state, and in 1280 was for some reason or other heavily fined. These are the two earliest notices we have of him.[1] He was the true founder of the Sienese school, which was in its own way as lovely in its results as, and perhaps more original in its aim than, the other schools of painting in Italy. Duccio certainly seems to have got his training from some Byzantine master, perhaps in Con-

[1] *Cf.* Crowe and Cavalcaselle (ed. E. Hutton), "A New History of Painting in Italy" (Dent, 1909), vol. ii, p. 1 *et seq.*

Duccio *Opera del Duomo, Siena*

CENTRE PANEL OF THE MAJESTAS

stantinople itself, perhaps in Siena. Like many great artists, he seems to have remained poor his whole life long; at any rate, he was continually summoned for debt. Whatever vicissitudes Fortune may have thrust upon him, this at least he was allowed to do—to follow his art, to express himself; and the Majestas, which is housed none too well in the Opera, is his masterpiece.

"It was the most beautiful picture that was ever seen or made," says Andrea Dei, his contemporary. "It cost more than three thousand gold florins, and Duccio, the painter, laboured many years at it." As a fact, he took three years to complete it; the work was commissioned on 9 October, 1308, and was borne to the high altar of the Duomo in triumph on 9 June, 1311. It seems probable that the rumour of its triumph was stolen by Vasari, probably unconsciously, and told again of the Rucellai Madonna in S. Maria Novella. However that may be, an anonymous chronicler of the time, whose work is now in the Archivio of Siena, gives us a very circumstantial account of Duccio's triumph. "On the day that it was carried to the Duomo," he writes, "the shops were shut; and the Bishop bade that a goodly and devout company of priests and friars should go in solemn procession, accompanied by the *Signori Nove* and all the officers of the Commune and all the people; all the most worthy followed close upon the picture, according to their degree, with lights burning in their hands; and then behind them came the women and children with great devotion. And they accompanied the said picture so far as the Duomo, making procession round the Campo as is the use, all the bells sounding joyously for the devotion of so noble a picture as this. And all that day they offered up prayers, with great alms to the poor, praying God and His Mother, who is our advocate, that He may defend us in His infinite mercy from all adversity and all evil, and that He may keep us from the hands of traitors and enemies of Siena."

The picture thus honoured is one of the great works of the Middle Age. In the midst, on a vast throne, is seated the

Madonna Advocata Senensium, with her Divine Child in her arms. Four angels on either side gaze at this wonder, leaning dreamily on the back and sides of the throne, while to the right and left on either side six others stand on guard. In front of these stood SS. John Evangelist, Paul, Catherine John Baptist, Peter, and Agnes; and before all in adoration knelt the four Bishops, the patrons of the city, SS. Savinus, Ansanus, Crescentius, and Vittorius. On the footstool of the six-sided throne was written—

MATER SANCTA DEI SIS CAUSSA SENIS REQUIEI SIS
DUCCIO VITA TE QUIA DEPINXIT ITA.

This, being interpreted, prays, "Holy Mother of God, be thou the cause of rest to Siena, and to Duccio life, because he has painted thee thus."

But this was not all. This altarpiece, as I have said, was set up over the high altar of the Duomo, and in those days the high altar stood under the cupola. It had therefore to be seen from both sides: from the nave where the people worshipped and from the choir where the Chapter was gathered. The Madonna enthroned with the Divine Child and Angels and Saints, as I have described it, faced the people, and beneath this was a *gradino* of nine panels. On the other side Duccio painted twenty-six small panels illustrating the life of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, above a *gradino* of nine panels. In all, with the *gradini*, the altarpiece consisted of forty-four small panels beside the Majestas, only thirty-five of which remain in Siena. The rest are scattered. Three of the western *predella* panels are in Berlin, three of the eastern *predella* panels are in the National Gallery, while three other panels are in the possession of Mr. Benson, of London.[1]

It is a pity that the Sienese authorities cannot find a better

[1] *Cf.* Crowe and Cavalcaselle (ed. E. Hutton), *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 8 *et seq.* Mr. Berenson, "Central Italian Painters" (1909), gives an excellent description of the Majestas.

room in which to place this, perhaps the greatest work in their possession. It should be re-erected, if not in a church—that might seem to be impossible—then in a room by itself. The missing panels could be replaced by copies. As it hangs at present it is impossible to appreciate its true effect. What it must once have been in the Duomo we shall never know.

It is difficult to look at the other pictures in the room in the light of this spoiled splendour. Yet they are worth looking at, especially a spoiled but still lovely Pietro Lorenzetti, the Birth of the Virgin, and four spoiled but beautiful panels, early work by Ambrogio Lorenzetti.

Nor should one forget to enjoy the view over the city from the façade, reached by a door at the end of the room.

Turning now to the Baptistery, you descend the steps into the Piazza di S. Giovanni, and passing the Palazzo del Magnifico on the right, built for Pandolfo Petrucci by Cozzarelli, you are face to face with the unfinished façade of S. Giovanni by Mino del Pellicciaio, which, though unfinished, is really a success. The interior is beautiful. In the midst is the great font, designed by Jacopo della Quercia, the greatest of Sienese sculptors; while the bronze reliefs, six in number, which adorn it are the work of some of the greatest masters of the fifteenth century, namely, Jacopo himself, Giovanni di Turino the Sienese, Lorenzo Ghiberti and Donatello the Florentines. Della Quercia's relief is that facing the apse, the Vision of Zacharias. It is flanked by two figures of Justice and Prudence by Giovanni di Turino. Beside it is the Birth of John Baptist by the Turini, the figure of Fortitude being from the hand of Goro di Neroccio. The Turini are also responsible for the next relief, the Preaching of the Baptist, the figure of Charity beside it being by Giovanni. Lorenzo Ghiberti made the two following reliefs—the Baptism of our Lord and the Baptist before Herod; while Donatello made the Feast of Herod, which comes next, as well as the two figures of Faith and Hope which flank it, and three of the delightful bronze *putti*. The extraordinarily vigorous and dramatic work of the Florentines, especially that of Donatello

with its realism, strikes one strangely beside the more ideal and decorative work of the Sienese masters. The statue of S. John Baptist and the five marble reliefs of the Prophets, which complete the work, are by Della Quercia. On the walls we see the work, utterly spoiled now by repainting, of Vecchietta and his pupils.

Returning now to the Piazza del Duomo, we enter the Ospedale di S. Maria della Scala, which fills the whole side of the Piazza facing the Duomo. Built first as a sort of poor-house in the eleventh century by the canons of the Duomo, it later became a lodging for pilgrims as well as a hospital. Here S. Catherine ministered to "the least of these My brethren," and S. Bernardino served the plague-stricken in the pestilence of 1400.

Passing a marble tomb by Cozzarelli and, in a room on the right, a fresco of the Visitation by Beccafumi, one enters the great hall or Pellegrinaio, which holds the frescoes which tell the story of the hospital. They are chiefly the work of Domenico di Bartolo. One sees the Marriage of Foundlings, Almsgiving, the Care of the sick. Opposite, Pope Celestine III takes the Ospedale from the care of the canons and gives it to the laity. Beside this last one sees the reception of a Sister, a work by Primo della Quercia. Then, again, the enlargement of the hospital by Domenico di Bartolo, and close to it, full of little children, the Dream of a devout woman, a charming and lovely work by Vecchietta.

Leaving the Pellegrinaio one passes into the Deposito delle Donne, full of the spoiled work of Vecchietta in 1448; and so into the Infermeria di S. Pio, where is a fresco in monochrome by Domenico di Bartolo of the Beato Sorore, to whom legend attributes the foundation of the hospital. Close by is the chapel, a building mainly of the fifteenth century. On the altar is a bronze of our Lord by Vecchietta.

Leaving this church, one descends to the chapels of the Confraternities beneath the Ospedale. In that belonging to the Compagnia di S. Caterina, where, in fact, S. Catherine often came to pray in the midst of her ministrations, is a

Virgin and Child by Taddeo Bartoli. Below we come to the chapel of the Compagnia della Madonna, now a small picture gallery. Among the many spoiled works are a triptych by Duccio of the Crucifixion, and by the same master the wings of another representing the Entombment and the Flagellation. A Virgin with S. Catherine of Alexandria, S. Catherine of Siena, and other Saints is a spoiled work by Fungai. On the next wall is a Madonna and Child by Sano di Pietro. Perhaps the finest piece here, however, is Benvenuto di Giovanni's S. Catherine leading Pope Gregory back to Rome. Not far off is another of Benvenuto's works, a Pietà, and beside it a Holy Family by Sodoma, and a Madonna and Child surrounded by angels by Paolo di Giovanni Fei.

X

SIENA

TERZO DI CITTÀ

THE city of Siena from very ancient times was divided into three divisions, or municipal districts, known as the Terzo di Città, the Terzo di S. Martino, and the Terzo di Camollia. The districts seem to have sprung up about the three fortresses of which it seems Siena originally consisted—the Castel Vecchio to the south-west, the Castel di Val di Montone to the south-east, and the Castel di Camollia to the north. Thus there were three Sienas, not one Siena, and in Latin Siena was, in fact, always spoken of as Senae. The three *terzi* remained for ages separate communities, organized independently in civil, military, and economic affairs. And for long after Siena became one, the Magistracy of the Republic was in normal times composed of a multiple of three, the famous Nove—Nine—being perhaps the best-known example.[1] And seeing that Siena lies on a hill which breaks starwise into three summits, it is not surprising that the division into *terzi* has, in fact, lasted to our own day.

As we have seen, the central government of the city—of the three divisions which had become one—was situated in the cup, or hollow plain, between the three summits, and thus in the very centre of the city. The Castel Vecchio, on the south-western height, when unity had been achieved, became the Terzo di Città, for there the Duomo was situated,

[1] *Cf.* W. Heywood, "A Guide to Siena" (Torrini, Siena, 1903), p. 44, n. 1.

THE MANGIA TOWER, SIENA

and within this division was included the site of the central government—the Palazzo Pubblico. The Castel di Val di Montone, the south-eastern height, became the Terzo di S. Martino, taking the name of its parish church; while the northern height or ridge, by far the longest of the three, retained its name, being called the Terzo di Camollia. It is proper to the history of Siena, then, as well as convenient, to fall in with this ancient division of the city into three parts when making our examination of it. As we stand in the Piazza del Campo, we are at the point of junction of these divisions. If we pass into the Via di Città, we penetrate that *terzo*; if we enter Via Ricasoli, we enter Terzo di S. Martino; if we turn into Via Cavour, we come into Terzo di Camollia. We have already examined the chief monuments of the Terzo di Città in the Palazzo Pubblico and the Duomo and its dependencies. Let us now proceed by the Via di Città to find what remains to be seen in the Terzo di Città. Well, to begin with, there is the view of the Piazza and the Palazzo through the Costarella on the left as you follow on your way, and more than one fine palace on the right; and then just as you come where the Via di Città bends away to the right, on your left stands the great Palazzo Saracini, which, though it is a building now for the most part of the fourteenth century, was standing in the day of Montaperto, for it was from one of its towers that Ceccolini, the drummer, watched the progress of the great battle miles away, and gave the news to those who remained in the city.

What brings us to-day, however, to Palazzo Saracini is its famous picture gallery. Its chief glory is, of course, the works it possesses of the Sienese school. Taking the works in chronological order, we find a genuine work by Duccio there—a mere fragment, however—a half-figure of an angel (1236). The Trecento is further represented by two pinnacles (1266), comprising the Annunciation, by Andrea Vanni (1322–1414), and by one of Paolo di Giovanni Fei's (1372–1410) strange pictures, a Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels, where Eve lies before the Virgin's throne (1269). It

is, however, in works of the Quattrocento, as we might expect, that the gallery is richest. Sassetta (1392–1450) is represented by two works—a charming small triptych (1278) and a most exquisite *predella* representing the Adoration of the Magi (933), officially given to Fra Angelico. The work of Sassetta's disciple, Giovanni di Paolo (1403–1482) is to be seen here in what is perhaps his best work—a large panel, dated 1472, of the Madonna and Child in the midst of Cherubim (1263), as well as in four little panels of the life of our Lord (1257–1260). Andrea Vanni's Annunciation forms the pinnacles of Giovanni's large picture. There are also several pictures here by Sano di Pietro (1406–1481), Sassetta's pupil: Four fragments of Saints (1237, 1238, 1277, 1278), Our Lord in the hands of His Enemies (1265), and in one of the private rooms of the Palace a fine Madonna and Child with Angels and SS. Jerome and Bernardino on either side. Another pupil of Sassetta, Lorenzo Vecchietta (1412–1480), is well represented by a fine small panel of S. Martin giving half his cloak to a beggar (1273); while one whom he influenced very strongly, Neroccio di Landi (1447–1500), that charming artist, is well represented by a Madonna and Child with SS. John Baptist and Mary Magdalen (8) and a Madonna and Child with SS. Catherine and Bernardino (14), both fine examples of that master's work.

With the work of Pacchia (1477–1535) we are on the eve of the Cinquecento: he is to be seen in an excellent picture here, a Madonna and Child with SS. John, Bernardino, and Catherine (752). Beccafumi (1485–1551), altogether of the decline, has here a large but unpleasing Marriage of S. Catherine (15), a picture of the Rape of the Sabines (1422), and an earlier picture of the Madonna and Child (1029). And Balducci is seen in a rather charming and simple panel representing the Dream of Hercules.

As for the other Italian schools, that of Milan is best represented in the numerous works here of Bresciano; while the Florentine school is best seen in a portrait (205), the work of Mainardi, the pupil of Ghirdandaio.

Leaving the Palazzo Saracini, you follow the Via della Città, noting the fine old palaces on your way, till you come to the Piazza di Postierla, where on the right rises the tower of the Forteguerri de' Grandi. In this piazza the Via della Città ends, but you will turn to your left into the Via di S. Pietro, beside three fine Gothic palaces, of which the finest is the Palazzo Buonsignori. Where the streets open and turn, on your left, is the Church of S. Pietro alla Scala. Here are some charming works by Sano di Pietro: in the sacristy two *tondi*—the Angel of Annunciation and St. Lucy; and over the second altar, on the north side, a fragment, usually covered. In the priest's house, adjoining the church, is a half-figure of our Lord, by Giovanni di Paolo.

Continuing on your way, you turn almost at once to the right into Via Tommaso Pendola, on the left of which is the old Convent of S. Margherita, in whose refectory are some frescoes by Fungai, while in the church is a spoiled statue of S. Margherita by a pupil of Quercia. Where Via Tommaso Pendola opens into a piazza bear to the left, passing through a narrow way under the Palazzo Celsi on your right, and so into the broad Via Baldassare Peruzzi. The Palazzo Celsi is one of the finest buildings of Peruzzi, and perhaps the finest specimen in Siena of the domestic architecture of the end of the fifteenth century.

Opposite the Palace is the great sixteenth-century Church of the Carmine, whose convent has been turned into a barracks. There is nothing of any great account to see; but the Well of the Diana, in the inner cloister, is curious as witnessing to the belief of the Sienese in a hidden river that ran beneath the city. The great need of Siena was water, and this well was sunk in the hope of discovering that fictitious stream. Perhaps the best picture in the church is Beccafumi's S. Michael, which is in its own way a masterly and dramatic piece of work. Vasari loved it, and has praised it so eagerly that many have been offended.

On leaving the church we return past the Palazzo Celsi

and continue on our way in Via Baldassare Peruzzi till we come to the piazza in which stands the Church of S. Lucia. Here there is an old copy of Simone Martini's fresco over the outer gate of Camollia. It is certainly worth attention.

From S. Lucia we can make our way down Via di S. Marco to the gate—there is a fine view all the way, and the gate is splendid; or returning to Palazzo Celsi and through the narrow passage under it into Via Tommaso Pendola, turn into the Via S. Quirico over the height, and so into Via Castel Vecchio on the right, through one of the oldest parts of the city. At the beginning of Via S. Quirico, on the left, stands the Church of S. Ansano, beside it a tower, where, as they say, S. Ansano was imprisoned. Within the church is a charming picture of the Epiphany, a fifteenth-century work with a figure of S. Ansano.

But perhaps the best way, certainly the least fatiguing, will be, instead of following Via S. Quirico and Via di Castel Vecchio into Via di S. Pietro, to return through Via Tommaso Pendola, or, from S. Lucia, through Via della Cerchia past the Renaissance Palazzo Finetti to the Piazza di S. Agostino.

The Church of S. Agostino is now a building of the eighteenth century, and uninteresting. But it possesses two treasures of a high importance: the one a Crucifixion, a late but lovely work by Perugino; the other, in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, a Massacre of the Innocents of an extraordinary vigour, realism, and horror, but of wonderful colour and fine effect, by Matteo di Giovanni. Beside this work Sodoma's Adoration of the Magi here seems even more insipid than in fact it is. We turn from it with relief to the beautiful triptych in the choir, the legend of the Blessed Agostino Novello, by Simone Martini.

Opposite S. Agostino is the little Church of S. Mustiola, whose delightful bell-tower is the most charming thing about her. On leaving her, we shall do well to wander down to Porta S. Marco to watch the sunset, or to return once more to the heart of the city, the Piazza del Campo by Via di S. Pietro and that winding, picturesque way, Via del Casato.

XI

SIENA

TERZO DI S. MARTINO

THE smallest of the three *terzi*, the Terzo di S. Martino, is best approached from the Piazza del Campo by the Via di S. Martino, which leaves it in the extreme south-eastern corner on your left as you face the Palazzo Pubblico. Passing thence, under the shadow of the Palazzo Piccolomini, you come in a few yards to the parish church of S. Martino, the sixteenth-century successor of a very ancient building. Just within, on the right, is a picture painted by Lorenzo Cini to commemorate the glorious victory of Camollia. That victory remains the most heroic in the later annals of the Republic, and in all respects coincides with that of Montaperto, though nearly three hundred years lie between them. Just as before the earlier battle Buonaguida had placed the city under the dominion of the Blessed Virgin, and led the people to her throne in the Duomo, so again, before the battle of Camollia, Margherita Bichi, widow of Francesco Buonsignori, a woman of prophetic soul, declared that the Blessed Virgin would protect Siena, and that it was her will that the city should especially honour the feast of her Immaculate Conception, not then proclaimed an article of Faith. On the following Sunday, as the Madonna had desired, all the magistrates went to the Duomo in procession, confessed and communicated and knelt before the Madonna del Voto, "to which at other times they had presented themselves";

and there, after the Mass of the Immaculate Conception was over, they confirmed and renewed the donation of the city "to its true Patroness." [1] The trouble in which Siena found herself was caused by the accursed ambition of the Medici Pope Clement VII, who, taking advantage of the internal dissensions of the Republic, and taking to him the Sienese exiles, thought with help of the Florentines—those blind papal Florentines, *quei Papal Fiorentini ciechi*, as the people said—to bring Siena under the heel of the Holy See. But there is still a God who disapproves of the inordinate greed of His ministers, who continually try to strangle civil liberty and so put their own permitted existence in peril. Moreover, the Blessed Virgin is the last person to refuse help to those who earnestly call upon her, and least of all to her own city of Siena. With these two Powers dreadfully adverse to them, the Pope and his blind Florentines had, as we may imagine, but a poor chance of success. Yet such is the blindness of fools that they persisted in striving to satisfy the insatiable greediness which has always distinguished them.

Is it any wonder, then, that in these circumstances they placed their guns badly outside the Porta Camollia? Is it any wonder that they did next to no harm? Is it any wonder that when the Sienese issued out of the city, shouting for joy and of great courage, they seemed to see Michael and his host of archangels, and that for every mile the Sienese pursued the Florentines ran ten? Truly that day the keys of Peter jingled unseemly about the quaking knees of one who sought hiding in haste; the triple crown was struck awry, the blind papal Florentines, led by the blind, fell, as the Gospel foretold, into the ditch; while the victorious Sienese, returning with songs and thanksgivings to the city of the Virgin, dragged within their walls the deserted guns under the banners they had won from the Church

[1] See the deliberations of the Balia and the Concistoro for 21 and 22 July in Pecci, "Memorie," &c., ii, pp. 211–213, quoted in E. G. Gardner, "The Story of Siena," p. 213. *Cf.* also W. Heywood, "A Pictorial Chronicle of Siena" (Torrini, Siena), pp. 82–86.

or from Florence. "You know," wrote Francesco Vettori to Machiavelli, "you know how unwillingly I allow myself to believe anything supernatural, but this defeat seems to me to have been as extraordinary—I will not say miraculous—as anything that has happened in the war from 1494 till now; it seems to me like those stories I have read in the Bible when a sudden terror fell upon a host, so that it fled it knew not from what."

Here in S. Martino we may remember such days as those. For it might seem they are scarce to be found any more upon earth.

There is but one other thing of real interest in the church amid much obscure but charming work, the litter of the years that come no more—I mean the fine Nativity of our Lord by Beccafumi.

Close by is the Misericordia, once an *ospedale* for pilgrims. But we follow the Via di S. Martino between the ancient palaces, past the Church of S. Giusto, where is a spoiled picture by Sano di Pietro, till at the end we come to the Church of S. Girolamo, where in the cloister is a wonderful panel by Fungai of the Assumption, while in the church itself are some works by Pacchia, and in the sacristy a Coronation of the Virgin by Sano.

S. Girolamo, however, cannot keep us long from the best of all, the great Church of the Servi di Maria, at the top of the Via dei Servi, whence we may see the desert that lies between Siena and her mountain—Mont' Amiata. Here, on the ramparts of the city of the Virgin, towers the church her especial servants have erected in her honour under the invocation of her Holy and Immaculate Conception. As we look at that beautiful pierced Campanile, how can we but remind ourselves of her beautiful names—

Rosa Mystica,
Turris Davidica,
Turris Eburnea,
Domus Aurea;
Foedera Arca,
Janua Coeli.

Within at the base is a fresco of Madonna Refugium Peccatorum rescuing souls from the lively flames of Purgatory; and who that has spent a summer day in the fires of the *contado*, far away where there is neither shelter nor shade, but has understood this thing, and the refreshment to be found within the city of the Virgin after the purgatorial heat of July.

Within, the church is spacious and lovely, and full of such treasures as once abounded everywhere, but that now are only left in such lovely shrines as this.

Above the first altar on the right is the great Madonna del Bordone by Coppo di Marcovaldo (1261), truly miraculous and worshipful. Later, over the last altar on this side of the church, is another Massacre of the Innocents by Matteo di Giovanni, painted in 1491, and later than the more splendid composition in S. Agostino. Then in the right transept is a new marvel, the Madonna del Popolo by Lippo Memmi, the most touching and lovely of his works, while over the sacristy door is a Madonna of the school of Cimabue.

Nor is this all, for in the next chapel we find a great fresco by Pietro Lorenzetti, the Massacre of the Innocents, but lately uncovered from the whitewash of fools, a truly splendid piece of work. Opposite to it is a Nativity by Taddeo Bartoli. In the chapel, on the other side of the choir, are two other frescoes, by Pietro Lorenzetti, of the Dance of Salome, and St. John in Patmos.

Besides the pictures we have seen, over the high altar Fungai placed his Coronation of the Virgin, and though it has been spoiled by restoration, it still retains a shadow of its loveliness. While to the Madonna del Popolo, and the Madonna del Manto, and the Madonna del Bordone we may add the lovely Madonna del Belvedere by Mino del Pellicciaio over the second altar in the north aisle.

And even as in the spiritual life Madonna leads us to the throne of her Son, who is God, so the Church of the Servi di Maria brings us to the SS. Trinità. You would certainly not seek it out but that the Servi had drawn you hither, for it is small and hidden away, and beside the Church of Madonna

Lippo Memmi *Servi, Siena*

MADONNA AND CHILD

holds but little that is very attractive—only a Madonna with Saints by Sano in a side chapel, and in the sacristy a Madonna with the Baptist and S. Michael Archangel by Neroccio—one of his lesser works.

From the SS. Trinità we descend the steps in the Via di Val Montone, and turning to the right, when we come to the Via Romana—which is the Via Francigena that enters Siena at the Porta Camollia—we proceed to the Porta Romana where it leaves it. Originally called Porta Nuova, it is the surprising and lovely work of Angelo di Ventura in the fourteenth century, and is the best example in the city of a double gate fortified. Over it is the still wonderful fresco by Sano di Pietro, quite spoiled by restoration. Returning on our way up the Via Romana, we come, at the first turn of the great road, to the little church of S. Galgano with the Augustinian convent of the Santuccio behind it. The two fine statues to be found there of the Madonna and Angel of Annunciation are by a disciple of Jacopo della Quercia.

Where the Via Romana becomes Via Ricasoli we turn to the right, and gain admittance, if we can, to the Rifugio, where is the exquisite picture of Madonna praying, which Mr. Berenson gives to Pier Francesco Fiorentino. In the schools are several fine Sienese pictures, a Madonna and Child by Fungai, and two spoiled works by Sano.

Close by is the Palazzo di S. Galgano, where there is another Sano.

From here we follow the Via dei Pispini to the Church of S. Spirito, whose chiefest possessions are a Virgin in Glory by Matteo Balducci, perhaps his best picture, and a Crucifix by Sano di Pietro. In the Cappella degli Spagnuoli, in the south aisle, are frescoes by Sodoma: they are certainly nothing to boast of. The terra-cotta Nativity is by one of the later Robbia.

From this church we may, if we will, follow the Via dei Pispini to the great Porta, taking on our way the Church of S. Chiara, a charming piece of architecture. In any case we shall return along Via Ricasoli, passing, just before we come

to the Palazzo Piccolomini on the left, the Loggia del Papa, a building of Federighi's in 1462 for Pius II. It has not its equal in all high Siena for charm and delight.

As for the Palazzo Piccolomini, it will stand for ever, as it was evidently meant to do, let us hope. The finest architectural work of the Renaissance in Siena, it is now the Archivio of the city. Its chief treasure, perhaps, are those Tavolette, or covers of the books of the customs which form in themselves a history of the Republic. Those who wish rightly to understand them cannot do better than buy Mr. Heywood's little book about them, "A Pictorial Chronicle of Siena," where the whole subject is discussed, explained, and wonderfully set in order.[1] But to get this book you must pursue your way up till Via Ricasoli becomes Via Cavour, for it is there on the right-hand side that Signor Torrini keeps shop.

[1] You may buy this splendid and learned little work, full of illustrations, at Torrini's shop for 4 francs.

XII

SIENA

TERZO DI CAMOLLIA

TO explore the last *terzo* of Siena, the Terzo di Camollia, we leave the Piazza del Campo on the north and follow Via Cavour, which, like Via Ricasoli and Via Romana which continue it, is a part of the great mediæval highway from the north—the Via Francigena by which all the Emperors marched to Rome.

Almost at once we come on the right to the Piazza Tolomei, in midst of which is set the Church of S. Cristoforo, and which is closed by the great Palazzo Tolomei, the last remnant in Siena of all that once belonged to that tremendous family. This square was once one of their strongholds, almost surrounded by their houses. The Church of S. Cristoforo, which has played a great part in the history of Siena—for there the Magistrates were used to assemble before the Palazzo Pubblico was built, while the Commune assembled in the Piazza itself—has been altogether rebuilt, and is now of little interest, save that it holds Pacchia's Madonna and Child enthroned between S. Luke and the Beato Raimondo, one of his best pictures.

Hence, passing round the north side of the church, we cross the top of the Via Sallustio Bandini and enter the piazza before the too late Renaissance Church of S. Maria di Provenzano. Begun in 1595 and finished sixteen years later, the church is the great shrine of that image of the Madonna which, owing chiefly to a quarrel between the Archbishop of

Siena and an historian that prevented the usual adoration of the Madonna del Voto in the Duomo, was the object of almost universal worship in the sixteenth century in Siena.

Mr. Heywood, in his excellent and too little known volume, "Palio and Ponte,"[1] tells the story of the rise to fame of this image. In 1594 the people of Siena were afflicted by a very grievous famine, and desired to turn themselves to their advocate and to implore once more the pity of their suzerain Lady the Blessed Mother of our Lord, Mary most Holy. But as it happened at this very time a furious contest was raging between Ascanio Piccolomini, Archbishop of Siena, and Giugurta Tommasi, historian and rector of the Opera del Duomo, so that it was not possible for them to go, as of old, to the Madonna del Voto in the Cathedral. Now for some time it had been whispered that an image of our Lady, which stood between two windows of a humble dwelling in the Via di Provenzano di Sotto, was working miracles. On 1 July, the Vigil of the Visitation, this suspicion was made certain by a very remarkable occurrence, which happened while her shrine was being decorated against the *festa*.

"Seated in the same street," Mr. Heywood tells us, "was a certain Giulia di Orazio, a woman of notoriously evil life, who was tormented by an incurable malady. She, beholding these preparations, commenced to scoff at those who made them and at the Blessed Virgin. That same evening at dusk she felt herself compelled by some mysterious force to go and kneel before the sacred image, beseeching pardon and health. On the following day she returned once more to offer up the same petitions, and a few hours later was made perfectly whole; and when her doctor arrived, as was his wont, to treat the sore produced by her illness, on removing the bandages which covered it he found, to his amazement, that every trace of disease had disappeared. The woman hastened forth to offer praise and thanksgiving for the mercy vouchsafed,

[1] W. Heywood, "Palio and Ponte" (Methuen, 1904), p. 213. See also F. Bandini-Piccolomini, "La Madonna di Provenzano e le origini della sua chiesa" (Siena, 1895).

SIENA : FONTENUOVA

narrating with emotion, to all those who stood by, the great salvation which had been wrought on her behalf. The tale passed from mouth to mouth, and ere night fell the whole population thronged to the Contrada di Provenzano to pray to the miraculous Madonna."

Thus began the great *festa*, one of the greatest in Siena, which is held on the day of the Visitation in July: and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Brandano, Christ's madman, "Siena vedrai tutte le tue donne andare a Provenzano"—"Siena, thou wilt see all thy women go to Provenzano." As I have said, the Church of S. Maria di Provenzano, which was built as shrine for the miraculous image, was begun in the following year, 1595.

Passing round to the north of the church, we follow the street, which, after crossing the Via di Giglio, enters the Via de' Rossi, along which we pass to the Piazza di S. Francesco.

This spot has been a Franciscan settlement since 1236, but the church we now see is mainly of the fourteenth century. It is, however, but a shell, for all the splendid monuments which once made S. Francesco to Siena what S. Croce is to Florence were destroyed in the great fire of 1655. To-day the church contains little of interest, some frescoes by the Lorenzetti and the fifteenth-century tomb of Cristoforo Felici by Urbano of Cortona. The Lorenzetti frescoes are in the first and second chapels in the south aisle. In the first is a Crucifixion, somewhat spoiled, by Pietro Lorenzetti; in the second are two frescoes by Ambrogio, the Martyrdom of certain Franciscans in Morocco and S. Francis before Pope Honorius III.

Close by in the chapel of the Seminario is a splendid panel by Ambrogio Lorenzetti of the Madonna and our Lord, one of his best works, while in the refectory are some spoiled frescoes by the same artist. And in the parlour of the Seminary is a Madonna and Child by Segna di Buonaventura.

On the south side of the Piazza stands the Oratorio di S. Bernardino, which contains some poor works by the later

Sienese painters. In a room at the top of a flight of stairs over an altar is a Madonna by Sano di Pietro.

After returning to the Via de' Rossi we take the first street to the right, and following it come to the Porta Ovile. Above the gate hangs an ancient Crucifix, and to the left is a fine but spoiled fresco by Sano di Pietro of the Madonna between SS. Bernardino and Ansano. Without the gate is the charming Fonte Ovile.

We return to the Via de' Rossi, and following it turn into the second street on the left, the Via di S. Pietro Ovile, which leads us at once to the church of that name. Within, over the door, is a Crucifix by Giovanni di Paolo. To the right is a very fine and exquisite copy of Simone Martini's great altar-piece of the Annunciation, now in the Uffizi. The authorship of this work has been the subject of much controversy.[1] Mr. Berenson and Mr. Perkins and Miss Lucy Olcott ascribe it, I believe, to an unknown master of the later Trecento; Mr. Douglas, on the other hand, declares it is by Sassetta. However that may be, the pinnacles above are by Matteo di Giovanni. The Madonna enthroned opposite is from the hand of Pietro Lorenzetti, the two saints, Bernardino and John Baptist, at the sides being the work of Matteo di Giovanni.

We return to the Via de' Rossi and follow it to the left. Almost at once a street leaves it on the right. Following it we come to the Piazza di S. Donato, before the church of that name, where there is a painting of Pacchia's, and in the chapel of SS. Chiodi a Madonna and Child by Andrea Vanni.

Following once more Via de' Rossi, we presently reach the Via Cavour. In it we turn to the right and proceed past the Palazzo Spannocchi, now the Post Office, the Palazzo Salimbeni, and the Palazzo Tantucchi, which holds a fine fresco of the Madonna and Child by Benvenuto di Giovanni. A little further beside two towers, once the Roman gate of ancient Siena, we turn to the left and come to the Church of S. Maria

[1] See Crowe and Cavalcaselle (ed. by E. Hutton), "A New History of Painting in Italy" (Dent, 1908), vol. ii, p. 109, note.

delle Nevi, with a façade by Federighi. Within is a fine altarpiece by Matteo di Giovanni over the high altar, from which the church takes its title—Madonna of the Snows. The *predella* tells the story of the foundation of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome.

Returning to Via Cavour, we presently pass on the right the Palazzo Costantini, a work, it is thought, of Francesco di Giorgio. Further and still on the right is the Church of S. Andrea, with its broken altarpiece by Giovanni di Paolo. Just there the Via Cavour changes its name and becomes Via di Camollia. Half-way to the Porta Camollia on the left stands the Church of S. Bartolommeo, with an ancient fresco of our Lord without. Within is the tomb of Pintoricchio and some few pictures, a repainted altarpiece by Sano di Pietro over the high altar, a triptych by some pupil of Bartolo di Fredi, a Madonna and Child with Angels by Vecchietta, and in the sacristy a banner with figures of SS. Vincenzo and Anastasio, the ancient patrons of the church, by Fungai.

Little is to be gained by continuing along Via di Camollia to the Gate, which is for the most part a building of the seventeenth century. On the way thither we pass at the head of a street on the left the fifteenth-century Church of Fontegiusta, where are several late pictures and an exquisite Coronation of the Virgin by Fungai.

Returning down Via di Camollia from the Church of S. Bartolommeo, we take the first street on the right, the Via Gazzani, which leads us to the little church of S. Stefano, where there is a fine polyptych by Andrea Vanni. The *predella* is the work of Giovanni di Paolo.

From the church door we look across the Passaggio della Lizza, which is the Sienese Cascine, or Park. Beyond it stands the Fortezza of Grand-Duke Cosimo. Striking across the base of the Lizza from the Church of S. Stefano we enter the *viale* Curtatone, which presently leads us to the great church of the Dominicans, S. Domenico, which occupies the same position on the west flank of Siena as S. Francesco does on the east. A vast and sober building of the late fifteenth century, S.

Domenico, like S. Francesco, occupies the site of a much earlier building, for the Dominicans settled in Siena in 1225.

Within the church has lost much of the simplicity which S. Francesco retains. Its great attraction among its numerous possessions is the frescoes by Sodoma in the chapel of S. Catherine, where in a marble reliquary the head of the saint is venerated. Personally, I have never been able to love these works. They seem to me to sensualize what was wholly spiritual, wholly lovely and simple in the life of a great saint. They point the way to Bernini. Even the most famous scene of all those represented here, the Swoon of S. Catherine, seems to me meretricious and full of stupidity, admirable though it may be as a composition. It is as though in painting the hills one had forgotten everything in them that is of importance to us. For me these works are sheer nothing. How much I prefer those humbler pictures in which S. Domenico is, alas! not too rich to-day: the spoiled Sano on the second altar in the south aisle, Giovanni di Paolo's panel of the Beata Caterina de' Lenzi close by, Francesco di Giorgio's picture of the Nativity, the Pietà by Matteo di Giovanni and his S. Barbara between S. Mary Magdalen and S. Catherine of Alexandria in the second chapel of the north aisle, his broken altarpiece in the west chapel, and that of Madonna enthroned by Benvenuto di Giovanni. But best of all that S. Domenico holds is the surprising view of the Duomo and the world to be had from a little window at the back of the choir. It is a vision, and beside it the pretentious works of Sodoma pass into nothingness.

But with S. Domenico we have entered upon that district of Siena which may be said to be S. Catherine's own. The greatest of all Tuscan saints and one of the greatest women of all time, after the Blessed Virgin she seems to us to be the liege lady of Siena. Like the city she dreamed, but unlike the city she realized her vision. She lost herself in God, she tended the sick and weary, she dominated the Church and led the exiled Pope by the hand back from

FONTEBRANDA, SIENA

Avignon. And close by the Church of S. Domenico—for she was a Dominican—she has her chapel, the Cappella della Volta, which in her day was actually a part of the church. Here she loved best to pray, and here she was granted many of her visions. To-day over the high altar hangs her portrait by Andrea Vanni—an authentic and contemporary portrait.

From S. Domenico, from the apse of S. Domenico we descend steeply by a rough way to Fontebranda, probably the most ancient of Siena's fountains—those fountains which first among so many other things still remind us of her ancient connection with Rome.

Before the Fountain passes the Via Benincasa, the street of the dyers, and here S. Catherine had her home. The house, the oratories which have taken its place, stands half-way up the steep street on the left. The first chapel we enter contains many reminders of her, best of all Neroccio's wonderful statue, which beside Pacchia's realistic work seems always more delightful. Above, by a flight of steps, we enter another chapel, covered with modern frescoes. Here was her cell, where she gave alms; to-day it holds many of her relics—her pillow, her lantern, her veil, her hair-shirt, a piece of her staff, and such. The third chapel, entered from a loggia, is the chapel of her Confraternity. Over the altar Fungai has painted her receiving the Stigmata, with how much finer an understanding than Sodoma has been able to show. Higher still, and on the other side of the court, is the fourth chapel of the Most Holy Crucifix, where there is a wonderful Crucifix by some disciple of Giunta Pisano. It was before this Crucifix that S. Catherine received the Stigmata.

Born 25 March—the Feast of the Annunciation—1347, Catherine was the daughter of Giacomo di Benincasa, a dyer, well-to-do and pious, and of Lapa di Puccio di Piagente, "a woman," as Raimondo, the Saint's confessor and biographer, tells us, "utterly alien from the corruption of our times albeit she was exceedingly careful and busy over the affairs of her household and family, as all those who know her are aware, for she is still alive." Catherine was one of the younger children

in a very numerous family, and Lapa seems to have loved her above the rest. Indeed, as a child she was the darling of her little circle of friends and neighbours, who named her Euphrosyne, as who should say Joy. We know little of her childhood, but we see her a baby of five years kneeling to salute the Blessed Virgin "on every step as she passed up and down the staircase of her father's house."[1] It was at this age, too, that we are told, as she passed down the precipitous Vallepiatta towards Fontebranda, hand in hand with her elder brother, "she looked up and saw over the summit of S. Domenico Christ seated on an imperial throne clad in purple robes and wearing the tiara, attended by S. Peter, S. Paul, and the beloved disciple S. John. He smiled upon her and blessed her, and the girl was absorbed in ecstasy, knew not where she was or what she did."

This seems to have been the beginning and the cause of her withdrawal from the ways of the world. She would fast and discipline herself and dream of entering the Dominican Order disguised as a boy. All this and more. She determined when she was seven to dedicate her maidenhood to Christ, she told her confessor later.

Now above all her other sisters Catherine loved Buonaventura best; and it was she who, when the child was twelve years old and marriageable, at their mother's suggestion persuaded Catherine to give herself to life, to dye her hair, and to conform to the fashions of the world. But in 1362 Buonaventura died, and Catherine, perhaps taking this for a sign, now certainly in bitter repentance, dedicated herself once more to God. Her family was angered and invoked the aid of a Dominican friar, Fra Tommaso della Fonte, a man of sincere piety and her confessor. He failed to move her, however, and since she was resolute, counselled her to pursue her way, to cut off her beautiful hair, and to wait upon the Will of God. Her family, however, was obdurate. Her room was

[1] See E. G. Gardner, "St. Catherine of Siena" (Dent, 1907), p. 6. This work is by far the best life of the Saint. It is essentially the work of a scholar, and it makes excellent and most pleasant reading.

taken from her, she was compelled to do all the hard work of the house, and no time was left her for prayer or devotion. But she found a silence of which none might deprive her, and where Time is not there is time for everything. "She made herself in her mind, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a secret cell that could not be taken from her, and this she never left." Moreover, "she firmly pictured to herself that her father represented our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, her mother the most Glorious Mother of God, and that her brothers and the rest figured the holy apostles and disciples, and because of this imagination she served them all with such great gladness and diligence that every one marvelled." She had dreams and visions too. S. Dominic appeared to her and offered her the habit of the Sisters of Penance and promised it to her.

Her father by now was convinced of her vocation, for one day as he passed through the house he came upon her praying in her brother's room, and over her head he saw a snow-white dove hovering. And presently he gave her leave to follow the Will of God.

Shortly afterwards she took the habit of the Sisters of Penance, the Mantellate, an Order really of widows. At first they refused it to her, but when she lay ill and asserted that God and S. Dominic would take her from the world unless she were received, they gave way and accepted her as a Sister. She received the habit from a Dominican friar in the Cappella della Volta in S. Domenico, probably in 1363.[1]

From this time her life became of a terrible austerity. For three years, we are told, she spoke to none but God and her confessor. Her whole time was spent in religious exercises, in mortification, in discipline, and in contemplation. A demonic possession followed. The devil, in whom we are much too clever to believe, but who nevertheless in his quiet way is always getting the better of us, assailed her imagination with every sort of abomination and her heart with the basest temptations. There followed what I think is known to mystical theology as "the Night Obscure." An immense and

[1] E. G. Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

frightful darkness and dryness descended upon her soul. She seemed to be on the brink of an unspeakable precipice and to be about to be cast down. Her arms were tireless in prayer, but no God answered. Her lips ceaselessly pronounced the invincible name of Jesus, but she seemed lost in the darkness and loneliness. Yet was she in perfect safety in the shadow of His wings.

> "Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi
> Et sub pennis ejus sperabis."

Then in this desert of the soul, in the emptiness that broke her heart, she cried out, "Where wast Thou, my divine Spouse, whilst I lay in such loneliness and fear?" And out of that vast silence a still small voice made answer, "I was with thee." "What!" she cried in horror, "amid those filthy abominations with which my soul was infested?" And again that voice answered, "Even so." And she fell down in anguish but cried out no more.

Then God, because He loved her, gave her His supreme last gift of patience, and when the devil, neglecting neither violence nor stratagem, solicited her pride, He covered her with the invincible buckler of His Love that she escaped those fiery arrows and remained in quietness.

She sought humility and ensued it. Coming out of herself, she ministered to the poor; they were His brethren. She served old Cecca, the leprous woman who was sent out of the city, who did nothing but curse her; and one afflicted with cancer she tended lovingly in ways unspeakable, though all she had in return was calumny. Most of all she strove with the turbulence, inconstancy, and hatred of her fellow-citizens, with too little effect, yet Pio II says there was not one who ever spake with her who went not away a better man.

It was probably in 1366 that Catherine began to go forth from her retreat. At this time, while she devoted herself to the poor and the sick, she was the victim of the jealousy and detraction of her sisters. A certain Suor Palmeria hated her,

but she was converted; others succeeded in alienating some of the friars, and for a time she was deprived of the Blessed Sacrament.

The years which followed were full of evil for Tuscany, and indeed all Italy. In April, 1367, Pope Urban left Avignon for Rome, where he arrived in October, only to leave the Eternal City again for Avignon in September, 1370. Siena was in a state bordering on anarchy. It was in the midst of this disquiet that Catherine's public life began. It opened with a number of conversions, and when, in 1374, pestilence laid waste the Senese, Catherine served the sick, and thousands came only to hear her. The Pope himself commissioned two Dominicans to hear the confessions of those whose hearts she had changed.

In 1375 she went to Pisa. Florence was ready to rise with Perugia against the absent Pope. On their banners they emblazoned the terrible and impossible word "Libertas." And Catherine marked it, and, throwing off her dreams, descended to deliver her people from their own folly. By her words she prevented Siena and Arezzo from joining the Florentines. Her acts were of an incredible swiftness and wisdom. In a kind of despair the Florentines appealed to her. She agreed to come to them, and when she arrived the chief magistrates met her at the gates. In their behalf, in behalf of Italy she set out for Avignon, which she reached on 28 June, 1376—she, aged twenty-nine, a woman and alone, the ambassador of Italy to the Pope, compelled to meet him to arrange terms of peace and to face his Cardinals alone. Yet she was in no way daunted, she was incapable of fear. Moreover, she was successful, more than successful; she gained the mastery, and bent the Papacy to her will. "I put the affair entirely in your hands," the Pope told her; "only I recommend to you the honour of the Church." But she was to find that it was not peace that Florence desired, but surrender.

Her greatest triumph, the true miracle of her life, was achieved, however, on this mission. She persuaded the Pope to return to Rome. Thus in her genius was found the highest

fulfilment of the Dominican idea—a union of the mystical and practical life. "Be a brave man and not a coward" she dared to say to Gregory, but she had said it first to herself.

From Gregory in Rome she went to Florence to bring him peace, and after a terrible struggle she won it for him. Amid scenes of daily violence and murder, in which again and again she risked her life undaunted, even when swords were drawn against her, she conquered in 1378, and immediately returned to Siena to her cell. Against her will she had left that silence, and at the first opportunity she returned to it to lose herself in God.

And there our Lord discovered to her mysteries, let us admit it, far beyond our understanding. Her whole life became a continual miracle absorbed in a Divine contemplation. We hear of almost incredible fasts, of humiliations and calumnies unthinkable. She rejoiced. One day Christ offered her two crowns, of gold and of thorns, and bade her choose. And she answered, "I desire, O Lord, to live always conformed to Thy Passion, and to find pain and suffering my repose, my delight." Then, taking the crown of thorns, she pressed it down upon her white forehead.

To torture her last years there befell the Great Schism, when Urban VI was chosen in Rome and Clement VII at Anagni. Then she wrote those wonderful letters that none can read without weeping. She wrote to the republics of her fatherland, to the princes of this world, to the great men of the Church, and to the Queen of Naples she dared to say "I will."

I pass over the ecstasies, the visions, the innumerable miracles God vouchsafed her. I pass by the reception of the Stigmata; these cannot well be spoken of in such a place as this. Of her works, too, I say nothing. It remains but to record her death, which befell in 1380, on 29 April, when she was thirty-three years old.

What it is important for us to feel, and if possible to understand, is that here we have something supernatural and wonderful, a shadow, though only a shadow, of the Divinity of

our Lord. "At her voice, nay, only looking upon her," we read, "hearts were changed." Of how many can such words be true? It is part of the glory of S. Catherine that we never doubt them for a moment, and part of our joy in her to remember that she has not lived in vain.

XIII

THE GALLERY OF SIENA

THE fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Siena, which witnessed the political decadence of the city, are chiefly remarkable in her story for her achievement in the fine arts; indeed, the only really great figure of those years is S. Catherine, perhaps the greatest personality she was ever able to produce.

Almost devoid of interest, then, as those two centuries prove to be from a political point of view, they are of very great importance to us by reason of the fine artistic achievement of which they were witnesses.

The end of the thirteenth century gave us the Palazzo Pubblico and the Mangia Tower, and with the opening of the fourteenth we come upon the first-rate work of Lorenzo Maitani, to whom we owe the façade of the Cathedral of Orvieto. The same century saw the building of the Baptistery of Siena and the choir of the Duomo, while the fifteenth century gave us the beautiful churches of S. Maria delle Nevi and of the Palazzo dei Diavoli, the Convent of the Osservanza, and many of Siena's most splendid palaces.

In sculpture, too, Siena produced during those years some charming works, her achievement culminating in the immortal work of Jacopo della Quercia, who is now but poorly represented in Siena by the beautiful débris of the Fonte Gaia in the Palazzo Pubblico, and by the relief of the Expulsion of Zacharias from the Temple and certain figures on the great font in S. Giovanni.

During the fifteenth century we have the work of Antonio

Federighi, of Vecchietta, of Neroccio, of Giovanni di Stefano, of Francesco di Giorgio, and of Cozzarelli, all of whom combined the art of sculpture with that of painting, and who have left many delightful memorials of their facility and taste.

But it is in painting, the most decorative of the arts, that Siena's greatest achievement lies. This was the true art of Siena.

It is idle to discuss whether Florence or Siena were earlier in the production of painters. Cimabue, whatever may have been his position and achievement, had very little to do with Florentine painting as we know it, and Guido of Siena, whose famous signed Madonna of 1221, or more probably 1281, is the earliest Sienese work we possess, has as little significance in the school of Siena.

The two great men who founded respectively the schools of Florence and Siena are Giotto and Duccio di Buoninsegna, and of them Duccio is the earlier, but they can in no sense be called rivals. Giotto's aim in his art was to endow painting with all the solidity and actuality of life, and this, through his genius, became the aim of the school of Florence. Duccio, on the other hand, was concerned with a subtler and more purely æsthetic ideal. He found in painting an exquisite decorative splendour, which he set himself to develop, and by his genius compelled every Sienese artist who followed him during some two hundred years to pursue the same road. Florentine painting, with a few exquisite exceptions, is a representation of life; Sienese painting, with a few negligible exceptions, is an expression of it. It is thus we may best, perhaps, define the difference, the impassable difference, between the two schools.

In every history of Sienese painting we hear much of the conservatism of the Sienese, and we are told that such conservatism is natural and proper to a mountain people. But the Sienese are not a people of the mountains, but of the lower hills on the verge of a desert; their political history shows almost every weakness but that of a confirmed conservatism. They are unstable, hasty, easily roused, quickly appeased,

without persistence in anything. And, indeed, it is on the morrow of her forsaking of the Ghibelline cause that her painters begin to be famous. It is true that Siena seems to us to have been more isolated than Florence, and in part we impute her fall to this. But it is doubtful whether, in fact, she were so isolated in the Middle Age. The Via Francigena, the great mediæval highway of Italy, passed through the city. No such great artery of traffic and international movement passed through or even near Florence; the Vie Aretine, old and new, were of an infinitely less importance, and it is not till late that we find them in any sense international. The truth is that the development of these two schools of painting had very little to do with conservatism or its opposite. The Sienese advanced and developed their art as indubitably as the Florentines, but on different lines. What we see, what we are far too ready to explain by such vague terms as conservatism, is really a fundamental difference in the apprehension of life, an æsthetic difference too, in its representation as in its expression. The Florentine expressed himself once for all in Giotto. All Florentine art is but a development of Giotto's art. The Sienese expressed himself almost as completely in Duccio. All Sienese art is but a development of Duccio's art. What we have here, then, is a difference in fundamentals, not in development, and with fundamentals conservatism can have nothing to do.

Duccio saw life and wished to express it in a different way from Giotto. His intention was different; not necessarily less fine or splendid or beautiful, but different. To the mid-Victorian critic—and all our histories of Italian painting are of that time—Florentine painting seemed not only to be the direct ancestor of the art of his own time, but, in fact, to profess the same principles he himself thought he saw practised. Moreover, Sienese art was very imperfectly known. It had no Vasari, and the historians and men of letters of Siena were out of all comparison feeble beside their Florentine brethren. It is thus we have been led to consider Florentine art as "true art," fruitful and progressive, while in

the art of Siena we have been told there is nothing but reaction and conservatism. Nor was this verdict wholly unreasonable. The Florentine school founded on the Roman—on the study of Nature, that is, and first through the antique—was the true heir, if any heir there was, of Pheidias and the sculptors of Greece; it was essentially European in its derivation and in its ideals. Hence its success. But the Sienese school, it may be more original than the Florentine, derived not from that great European school which has always insisted upon the importance of realism, but from the Byzantines, whose ideal was very different, who denied realism any vast importance, and expressed themselves in a wonderful symbolism, an exquisite decoration. What we see in the art of Siena is the principle that underlies the art of Japan. It is therefore that the schools of Florence and of Siena, essentially different as they are, cannot be truly or honestly compared the one with the other, and if they should be, it is certain that no just or even possible verdict can ever be arrived at from such comparison. One cannot compare, for instance, Westminster Abbey with St. Peter's at Rome. To do so would be a fault in logic, for they are in different categories. If one wishes to judge Westminster Abbey or St. Peter's Church one must analyze them on their own lines, and our verdict must be given for or against them in so far as they carry out or fail to carry out the laws of their own being. It is the same with Florentine and Sienese painting. The laws which govern, the ideals which inspire, Sienese art, are essentially different from those which govern and inspire Florentine art. To understand this is the beginning of wisdom in the criticism of these schools of painting, and only by founding our criticism on this fundamental truth can we hope to arrive at any just estimate of the value and delight of either. Let this be granted, and we shall soon be reasonably convinced of what our eyes have assured us from the first, that the intention of the Florentine was different from that of the Sienese; in other words, what the Florentine was trying to do was very different from what the Sienese was attempting.

To define this difference is the business of æsthetics, but perhaps we may roughly express it by saying that the Florentine was trying to represent life, the Sienese rather to express it. We shall not, however, allow ourselves to be confined by any such rude definition. We shall continually use our eyes, we shall continually distinguish. But it might seem obvious to the most casual observer of Simone Martini's Annunciation in the Uffizi that the man who painted that masterpiece—and the hand of man can do no more—might very easily, had he wished, have given us a realistic representation of it. Simone could see at least as well as ourselves, who live for the most part in obscure and foggy cities, that the sky is blue and not gold, and that there are three dimensions in the world and not two alone. He disregarded such mere facts as unessential, and without concern for him. Why? Because, like every art that has ever existed in the world, his art, too, was a convention, and such facts as those I have named were to a large extent outside his convention. He used gold where blue would have been in reality; he used two proportions where three are found in life, in the same way as a poet uses metre and rhythm, neither of which has any place in actual human speech or the language of the world. He used them not for the sake of ornament or for anything less than that they were part of the essential language of his art and for the sake of beauty. Pheidias and Giotto used a different, a realistic convention for the same reason, and for the sake of beauty too, but a different sort of beauty. Giotto's art, the art of Europe generally, is bound by and essentially dependent upon our apprehension of reality. Sienese art is essentially dependent upon and is ruled by something else, and if it be reality it is not our apprehension of it. Life, the representation of life as we see it, is with it a secondary, sometimes a tertiary need. It subordinates such need to the expression of life in a certain essence, a true symbolism, to a certain harmony of lines and colours within a given space, and these, by their own beauty and inter-relation, contrive within that space a perfect loveliness.

We shall not, then, in our enjoyment of the exquisite art of

Siena, allow ourselves to indulge in such a barbarism as to compare Florentine with Sienese painting, we shall not attempt to overwhelm Duccio with Giotto, or to bludgeon Simone with Masolino and Masaccio. We shall refuse to fight in an absurd cause, and forget the polemics of the critics in our delight in the beauty of the work produced during some two hundred years by the school of Siena.

And happily for the modern student, with his multiplicity of engagements, his here to-day and gone to-morrow, but to the sorrow of us more leisurely travellers, a vast and representative number of pictures of the Sienese school has been brought together in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, and these, with other works still scattered about Siena, allow us to study the Sienese school of painting without leaving the city.

The true founder of that school, which only in our own day has found any wide or general appreciation, is, as I have said, Duccio di Buoninsegna, who painted between the years 1278 and 1319. We know very little of him, but such of his work as remains to us might seem to prove that he must have had his training from some great Byzantine master, possibly in Constantinople itself.

The finest work from his hand that is left to us is the wonderful Majestas in the Opera del Duomo, which was carried in triumph to its place over the high altar of the Duomo on 9 June, 1311. It was then that the Madonna delle Grazie, which had, as the Sienese believed, procured them the victory of Montaperto, was deposed and removed to a place of less honour, Duccio's splendid double altarpiece being enthroned in her stead, only to be itself deposed in the sixteenth century when the present high altar was built.

Many other works by the master are to be found in Siena: in the Gallery an early work, a small Madonna enthroned (20), a panel of SS. Peter and John Baptist (22), another of the Magdalen (23), fragments from some altarpiece, a Madonna with four Saints (28), of which the Madonna and Child alone, according to Mr. Berenson, are from Duccio's hand, the rest being the work of Segna; a triptych of the Madonna, Saints,

Angels, and scenes from the Passion (35), and a polyptych of Saints, Patriarchs, Prophets, and Angels (47). In the Spedale Gallery are a fine Entombment and Flagellation (21), the Crucifixion in the midst being from another hand, and a Crucifixion (26). In the Palazzo Saracini is a beautiful bust of an angel (1236).

The closest and most devout of Duccio's followers, so far as we know them by name, were Segna and Ugolino. By the first there remain in Siena a Madonna with SS. Paul, John Evangelist, and Bernard (40), a signed work and two figures of Saints, S. Ansano (42) and S. Galgano (43), later works, in the Gallery; while in the reception-room of the Seminario of S. Francesco is a Virgin and Child. Nothing by Ugolino is left to-day in his native city.

The greatest of Duccio's pupils, the gayest, too, and the most in love with life, was Simone Martini (1285 (?)–1344). Nothing by him is to be seen in the Gallery, but his splendid though damaged frescoes of the Madonna and Child with Saints and of Guidoriccio da Fogliano on horseback in the Palazzo Pubblico, painted respectively in 1315–21 and in 1328, with the fine triptych, the Legend of Beato Agostino Novello, a later work, in the choir of S. Agostino, happily remain here.

Simone's pupil, Pietro Lorenzetti (1305–48), and his younger brother and pupil, Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1323–48), are the first Sienese painters who were touched by outside influences, those of Giovanni Pisano and Giotto. By the elder, Pietro, very much remains in Siena. In the Gallery are a S. Gregory (59), a Madonna in Glory (61), two fragments of landscapes (70, 71), an Apostle (79), a Madonna and Angels (80), a panel of S. Cecilia (81) painted in 1332, two fragments of a *predella* (83, 84), an Allegory (92), and two panels—S. Agnes and another female saint (578, 579). In the Opera del Duomo is a fine panel of the Birth of the Virgin (63), painted in 1342. In the Spedale are some frescoes of S. Anthony Abbot and other Saints. In S. Francesco, in the first chapel on the left of the choir, is a fine fresco of the Crucifixion, and in the third chapel on the same side some

ruined frescoes. In S. Pietro Ovile is a fine picture of the Madonna on the left wall, and in the Servi, in a chapel on the right, is a fresco of the Innocents, with other frescoes in a chapel on the left of the choir—Salome dancing, the Ascension of S. John, and certain saints.

Nor has Ambrogio, the greater of the two brothers, left us less. In the Gallery are five works or fragments from his hand: a S. Paul (52), a S. John Baptist (53), a small Madonna and Saints (65), a polyptych of the Madonna and Saints (77), and an Annunciation (88), painted in 1344. In the Opera del Duomo we find four fragments: panels of S. Francis (69), S. Mary Magdalen (71), S. Catherine (72), and S. Benedict (73). In the Palazzo Pubblico, in the Sala della Pace, we find his famous but obscure frescoes of Good and Bad Government, painted in 1338–40, and in the Loggia a spoiled fresco of the Madonna. In S. Francesco, in a chapel in the convent, is a fine panel of the Madonna and Child, painted in 1340. In S. Agostino there are the heads of some saints in fresco to the right of the great doors. And there used to be a fine Madonna in the Monistero di S. Eugenio, in the chapel to the left of the choir; but it has gone to America.

The Lorenzetti may be said to mark with their nameless disciples, whose work we see in the great frescoes of the Triumph of Death in the Campo Santo of Pisa, the highest achievement of the school of Siena. Barna, a rather feeble follower of Simone Martini, who has apparently left nothing in Siena, and Lippo Memmi (*c.* 1375), the brother-in-law of Simone, are not extraordinary, though the latter is a very charming artist. Lippo Memmi's work in Siena consists of two pieces—a panel of Madonna in the right transept of the Servi, over the altar of the Madonna del Popolo, and a fresco in the cloister of S. Domenico, the Madonna and Child with S. Paul and an Angel.

There follow Bartolo di Fredi (1330–1410) and Andrea Vanni (1332–1414). Bartolo di Fredi, a follower of Lippo Memmi and the Lorenzetti, was considerably influenced by

Barna. His works in Siena are very numerous, there being more than twelve in the Gallery alone, beside works in the Spedale, in the Palazzo Saracini, and the fine Madonna Nursing her Child in S. Martino. In the Gallery we find a polyptych of the Madonna and Saints (51), a Head of S. Michael (63), various saints on two *pilastri* (97, 102), two *predelle* (98, 99), Four Scenes from the Life of the Blessed Virgin (100), the Assumption of the Virgin (101)—these six being various parts of a work completed in 1388—another *predella* with five panels (103), an Adoration of the Magi (104), and a panel of SS. Antonio and Onofrio (106).

Andrea Vanni, too, was perhaps the pupil of Lippo Memmi; at any rate, he was the partner of Bartolo di Fredi, and he came under the same influences. His work, like his friend's, is very plentiful in Siena, the Gallery alone possessing certainly four pieces from his hand—a triptych of S. Michael, S. John Baptist, and S. Anthony Abbot (67), a S. James (113), a tabernacle with the Crucifixion and various Saints (114), and S. John the Evangelist (312).

He is followed by Taddeo di Bartoli (1362–1422), who developed under the influence of Bartolo di Fredi. The Gallery possesses some thirteen of his pieces, and his work is very plentiful elsewhere in Siena. His works in the Gallery include a Crucifix (55), the Crucifixion (122), the Adoration of the Magi (127), a small triptych of the Madonna and Child with Saints (128), panels of S. Peter Martyr (129), and S. Agnes (130), an Annunciation (131), painted in 1409, a Nativity (132), a triptych with the Nativity in the midst, between S. James and S. Domenico on the one side and S. Caterina delle Ruote and S. Maria Maddalena on the other, while above is the Resurrection of our Lord, with the Annunciation in the pinnacles. The remaining four pieces seem to be fragments. They consist of the Martyrdom of SS. Cosma and Damian (134), a S. Matthew (135), two panels of the Annunciation (143, 144), and S. Francis receiving the Stigmata (162).

One of the most graphic and charming painters of the

fifteenth century in Siena was Stefano di Giovanni, called Sassetta (1392–1450), who, Mr. Berenson tells us, was the pupil of Paolo di Giovanni Fei (1372–1410). Very little of Sassetta's work remains in Siena, but a few small pictures and fragments have been gathered into the Gallery—a S. Anthony Abbot (166), a Last Supper (167), two panels each with four Saints (168, 169), a small triptych of Madonna, Saints, and Angels (177), and a Madonna (325); they give but a small idea of his loveliness. His master, Paolo di Giovanni Fei, however, is very well represented indeed, not less than eighteen of his works being found in the Gallery, namely, a Madonna on a gold ground, unnumbered in Sala II; a Saint on horseback with three Soldiers (96), a Birth of the Virgin (116), a Madonna and Saints with the Crucifixion above (121), the central part of a triptych, a late work, a panel with S. Jacopo, S. Giovanni Battista, and a warrior Saint (126), a triptych of the Madonna Enthroned with our Lord, whom S. Catherine weds, two Angels, S. Lucy, S. James, and S. Bartholomew; on the right panel S. Francis and S. John Baptist, on the left S. Antony and S. John Evangelist (137). Beside these works there remain two central panels of triptychs (141, 142), a diptych of the Madonna and Saints (146), two triptychs of the Madonna and Saints (154, 183), a panel with S. Margaret, S. Scholastica, and S. Laurence (170), two wings of a triptych with Saints, Prophets, and the Annunciation (221), a Madonna and four Saints (222), a polyptych of Madonna and Saints (300), and four other pieces. As Mr. Perkins, that admirable student of Sienese art, has pointed out, Fei was unrivalled in his day as a painter of small panels. Almost all of his smaller works are, in fact, wonderfully delicate in workmanship and of surprising decorative effect. In his larger paintings he was not always so successful.

His contemporary, Luca di Tommé, is not so fine an artist, and is represented in the Gallery by but one work, a polyptych of S. Anne with the Blessed Virgin and Child, S. Catherine and the Baptist, S. Anthony and S. Agnes (109), which comes from S. Quirico d' Orcia.

The fifteenth century, in which the most charming figure in Sienese art is Sassetta, opens really with Domenico di Bartolo, who was made free of the Guild of Siena in 1428, between which date and 1444 we find him active. He is of the school of Taddeo Bartoli, but has tried to assimilate some influence from Florence; in this he was not very successful, and his rare work is often disappointing. One picture from his hand, signed and dated 1433, hangs in the Gallery of Siena—a Madonna and Child surrounded by Angels (164).

As for Giovanni di Paolo (1403–82), a pupil of Fei, strongly influenced by Sassetta, his work is but a wild-flower in the garden of Sienese art. More than twenty of his works are here. His contemporary, Sano di Pietro (1406–81), the pupil of Sassetta, is one of the best painters of the school, a delicate and sumptuous master, whose works fill the fourth and fifth rooms of the Gallery and run over into the sixth, fifty pictures in all finding a place there.

His fellow-pupil, Vecchietta (1412–80), is represented by four pieces in the Siena Gallery—the doors of a shrine (204), painted in 1445, a panel of S. Bernardino (205), a Madonna and four Saints (210), painted in 1465, and a S. Laurence (577). Delightful painter though he be, he does not charm us as his master can do; nor has he, I think, the brilliance and versatility of his pupil, Francesco di Giorgio (1439–1502), who was architect, sculptor, painter, and engineer, and who studied the Pollaiuoli of Florence. His works, rare elsewhere, are plentiful in Siena, ten pieces from his hand hanging in the Gallery, namely, Joseph and Potiphar's Wife (274), Susanna and the Elders (275), Joseph sold by his Brethren (276), an Annunciation (277), a Madonna and Child with an Angel (288), a Madonna and Child with S. Peter and S. Paul (291), a Madonna and Child with two Saints (292), and a fragment of an Annunciation (306), a Nativity (437), painted in 1475, and a Coronation of the Virgin (440), painted four years earlier.

Another and far more subtle and charming pupil of Vecchietta was Neroccio di Landi (1447–1500), the very

Neroccio *Gallery, Siena*

MADONNA AND CHILD

flower of the Sienese school of the fifteenth century. The five master works which hang in the Gallery are, perhaps, the loveliest things there. His masterpiece, the Madonna and Child with S. Jerome and S. Bernardino (281), is like some marvellous flower found pressed upon the gold of an ancient missal. His other works there are only less lovely—the Madonna with S. Catherine and S. Bernardino (285), the triptych of 1476 (282), the Madonna with six Saints of 1492 (278), and the Madonna with four Saints (287).

One of the best Sienese painters, Matteo di Giovanni (1435–95), always seems on the point of emerging into the more living art of Florence. Seven of his pictures are preserved in the Sienese Gallery, but not one of them can compare with his masterpiece, the Assumption of our National Gallery. His follower and imitator, Cozzarelli (1450–1516), is not to be named with his master, though his work is by no means without delight. Seven works from his hand hang in the Gallery.

Another lesser painter, but often a very charming one, though his later work is austere, Benvenuto di Giovanni (1436–1518), is represented in the Gallery by two works—the Ascension of 1491 and an earlier painting, a triptych with *predella* (435, 436) of 1475.

His son and pupil, Girolamo di Benvenuto (1470–1524), one of the last painters of the true Sienese school, is a lesser master well represented in the Gallery by nine works—the Nativity (342), the Deposition (369), a panel of four Saints (370), the Birth of the Virgin (372), the Dead Christ with two Angels (373), two pictures of the Madonna and Child (380, 395), an Assumption (383), and the Madonna with Saints and Angels (414) of 1508.

With Girolamo di Benvenuto we come into the sixteenth century, to the work of Pacchia, of Pacchiarotto, of Sodoma. But this is not Sienese work at all. It is a careful and too informed imitation of what other men have been content to do at last with the realistic tradition.

XIV

TO THE OSSERVANZA, IL MONISTERO, BELCARO, AND LECCETO

ONE soon grows weary of the straitness of the ways within the city wall even in Siena; and seeing that the country, a perfect and delicious garden, begins at every gate, it is not long before even the most hurried traveller finds himself compelled to venture forth, on foot or *in vettura*, if only for an afternoon, to explore those winding and lovely ways that lead him through the olive gardens and vineyards in and out of the valleys that gird the city round about. And these valleys, these hills, hold treasures not less splendid, though much less numerous, than the great *contado* of Florence, which is so rich in little towns and villages and country churches full of the simple pictures and shrines of four hundred years ago. There are four adventures that every one will undertake from Siena, if, indeed, he be anything more than the merest tourist, and even the tourist can scarce omit them. I mean a visit to the Osservanza, and that is the briefest, to the monastery of S. Eugenio, to the Abbey of Lecceto, and to the villa of Belcaro.[1]

And first as to the Osservanza. That is a good way to reach it which takes you on foot out of Porta Ovile, turning

[1] These, at least, all will see who spend but a week in Siena; these, then, I speak of here. The rest—the numberless walks and drives, the countless hidden villages and country churches—I hope to write of in a volume of "Country Walks about Siena," similar to my "Country Walks about Florence" (Methuen, 1908).

left where the road reaches the railway, passing under the line, and following a steep and rough path to the convent. By this way you may go in half an hour; you will drive by the carriage road no quicker, and lose many of the views of the city the path gives you, and you will be six *lire* (*prezzo Inglese*) at least the poorer.

The convent stands on the hill called Capriola, across the deep valley through which the railway runs southward from Siena, and commands some marvellous vistas. Modernized though the church has been, the whole place still has an air of the fifteenth century, and everywhere we find a remembrance of S. Bernardino, the founder who here restored the Observance of the true Rule of S. Francis, which during the centuries many Papal dispensations had considerably relaxed.

S. Bernardino of Siena, the S. Francis, as we might call him, of the fifteenth century, was born at Massa Marittima in the Senese in 1380, of the noble family of Albizzeschi. When he was but three years old we learn he lost his mother, and before he was seven he was orphaned, for his father, the chief magistrate of Massa, was carried off by the plague. He was brought up then by his Aunt Diana, who loved him, we are told, as her own son, and educated him piously, so that he was modest, humble, and devout, and even as a child took delight in visiting churches, serving at Mass, and, above all, in hearing sermons, in the art of preaching, of which he was to become so great a master.

Beside the love of eloquence which we find so early in him there was also a great compassion for the poor, which, not less than his preaching, was to mark him out from his fellows. One day, we read, when he was still but a child, seeing his aunt send away a poor person from their door without an alms, for, indeed, there was but one loaf in the house, he exclaimed, "For God's sake let us give something to this poor man; otherwise I will not dine nor sup this day." This, and other things, his aunt kept in her heart, encouraging him in pious customs, such as fasting every Saturday in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Then, at eleven years of age, he left

Massa to join his uncles in Siena, who put him to school there, and so modest was he withal, so pure of heart and conversation, that the most impudent were kept in awe by his presence, and when the conversation grew too free, if he passed by, the very loosest rakes in that corrupt city would say, "Hush, hither comes Bernardino!" And this was no more an effeminacy in him than in Cato, who in ancient Rome by his mere presence restrained the lewdness of a festival. Yet Bernardino did not altogether escape the touch of the brutality of his day, though he shamed that man who would have injured him. For, indeed, he was comely and beautiful, but his virtue secured him from more assaults, and he grew up to scourge the vileness of his time.

Now when he had completed the course of philosophy, and had applied himself to the study of civil and canon law, at the age of seventeen he enrolled himself in the Confraternity of Our Lady in the Spedale della Scala, and there served the sick for four years till in 1400 the plague once more descended upon Italy, so that in Siena twenty persons died every day in the Spedale, and almost all the priests, apothecaries, and servants belonging to the place were carried off. In this predicament Bernardino gathered about him twelve young men to aid him in the service of the Spedale, and for four months he kept the place in order. Then, the pestilence being over, he returned home sick at last of a fever brought on by his fatigues, which kept him abed for some months. He was scarcely recovered when he returned to the same works of charity, nursing with incredible patience during more than a year an aunt of his called Bartolommea, who was blind and bedridden. When she died, he retired to a little retreat he had found on the hill of Capraja, or Capriola, where to-day stands his Convent of the Observance which we are going to see. Here he lived in solitude, till he took the habit of S. Francis, among the fathers of the strict Observance, who had a convent on the hill of Colombaja not far away. After a year of novitiate, he made his profession on the day of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and his own birthday, it seems,

in 1404. There he dwelt, always striving to make the Rule more strict, pleased with insults and humiliations. When he went abroad it was in a threadbare short habit, to be pelted with stones by the rascals of Siena, and greeted everywhere with contempt. He was of noble family, and his relations naturally objected to his utter disregard of their position in the city; they abused and reproached him; but he heard Christ whisper, "If thou lovest Me, follow Me." And now, having prepared himself for preaching, he was ordered to practise it. For long he suffered an impediment in his speech, but Madonna took it from him, and for fourteen years he laboured in Siena and her *contado*, and he became there a light and a beacon to the whole Church.

Of his labours throughout Italy this is not the place to speak. For him, at least, the truth was so clear and so full of all delight that his continual wonder was that men would not hold to it. "O ye sons of men, how long will ye be dull of heart?" It is the burden of all his sermons.

His day was an evil day, a day of indescribable vices which he combated lucidly and freely with all his strength. He would have had men love our Lord altogether. To this end he caused the Perugian, whose business it was to make cards for gambling, to make instead little boards on which the sacred name of Jesus was curiously inscribed in gold letters for a remembrance of His love for man. Nor was he without offence. Pope Martin V imposed silence upon him, and he acquiesced, but when the Pope had heard the truth he dismissed him with his blessing, and pressed upon him the Bishopric of Siena in 1427. This he declined, no less resolutely than that of Ferrara, offered to him by Eugenius IV in 1431, and that of Urbino in 1435.

In Milan he rebuked the Visconti, and when the threat of death did not silence him, the Duke sought to bribe him, but he gave the money to those who for debt were in prison. This contempt for money appealed to Visconti. He could not imagine it. And ever after he venerated Bernardino as a saint. His travels covered all Italy; he pacified Perugia and

Ancona. In 1433 he went with the Emperor Sigismund to Rome, and then returned to Siena, where he founded this Convent of the Observance, and finished the other work he had begun, and in 1438 he was appointed Vicar-General of the Order of the Strict Observance in Italy. As General he laboured for five years, when in his age he began again to preach through all Italy. In 1444 he was again in Siena, and then, setting out for the Abruzzi, he was taken ill with fever on the road, and died at Aquila on 20 May, 1444, in the sixty-fourth year of his age.

It is to this true son of S. Francis that we owe the Osservanza of Siena. The buildings he left were but a small part of those we see to-day, it is true. But the enlargements of Pandolfo Petrucci at the close of the fifteenth century were made in his honour, and the restorations at the end of the seventeenth century are in some sort a tribute to him.

Passing under a fine loggia, you gain admittance by the great door, and find yourself at once in a big church of a single nave with a large choir, but without aisles or transepts. On either side all up the nave are chapels, and over their altars are pictures of great beauty. In the first chapel on the north is a picture of the Madonna and Child with Angels by Sano di Pietro, partly repainted. Over the altar of the second chapel is a splendid terra-cotta by Andrea della Robbia of the Coronation of the Virgin. Over the altar of the third chapel is another picture by Sano di Pietro, the Madonna and Child with S. James and S. Bernardino. Its *predella* is placed under a polyptych by Taddeo di Bartoli in the next chapel.

On either side the high altar are Madonna and the Angel of the Annunciation by Andrea della Robbia. The altar itself contains relics of S. Bernardino in a fifteenth-century casket. In the choir on either side the window are a picture of S. Catherine with a donor by Girolamo di Benvenuto, and a picture of S. Bernardino, signed and dated 1439, by Pietro di Giovanni.

The chapels on the south side of the nave are not less rich than those on the north. In that nearest the high altar is a

splendid altarpiece of the Madonna and Child with S. Ambrose and S. Jerome, with above an Annunciation by Sassetta. This is the great treasure of the church, and perhaps the finest work by Sassetta in Italy, though the altarpiece at Asciano is perhaps as fine. In the next chapel is a Crucifixion ascribed to Sodoma, but certainly not from his hand. The last chapel contains a S. Anthony of Padua by Cozzarelli. A Pietà by the same artist is in the sacristy, where, too, may be seen the tombstone of the Magnificent Pandolfo Petrucci. In the crypt we find the cell of S. Bernardino.

The beauty of the country in which the Osservanza stands, the splendour of the views thence, for one may not only look upon Siena, but on the perfect shape of Mont' Amiata southward and northward to Monte Morello, invite one to linger in the country, and so it was by many a byway and olive garden that I came at last to Il Monistero. The less adventurous, less haphazard traveller, however, will do well to return from the Osservanza to the city, and to leave it again by the Porta S. Marco; the Monistero lies a little further from that gate than the Osservanza from Porta Ovile. And, indeed, it is but few who will care to visit these two shrines in one day; they are best seen and enjoyed if an afternoon be devoted to each.

The way out of Porta S. Marco lies as nearly south as may be, and the road winds down picturesquely from the city, giving you your first real idea, perhaps, of its remoteness and height. The views all the way are fine. At the gate Il Monistero comes in sight and beyond and beyond Mont' Amiata and Cetona, and between them the bizarre stronghold of Radicofani.

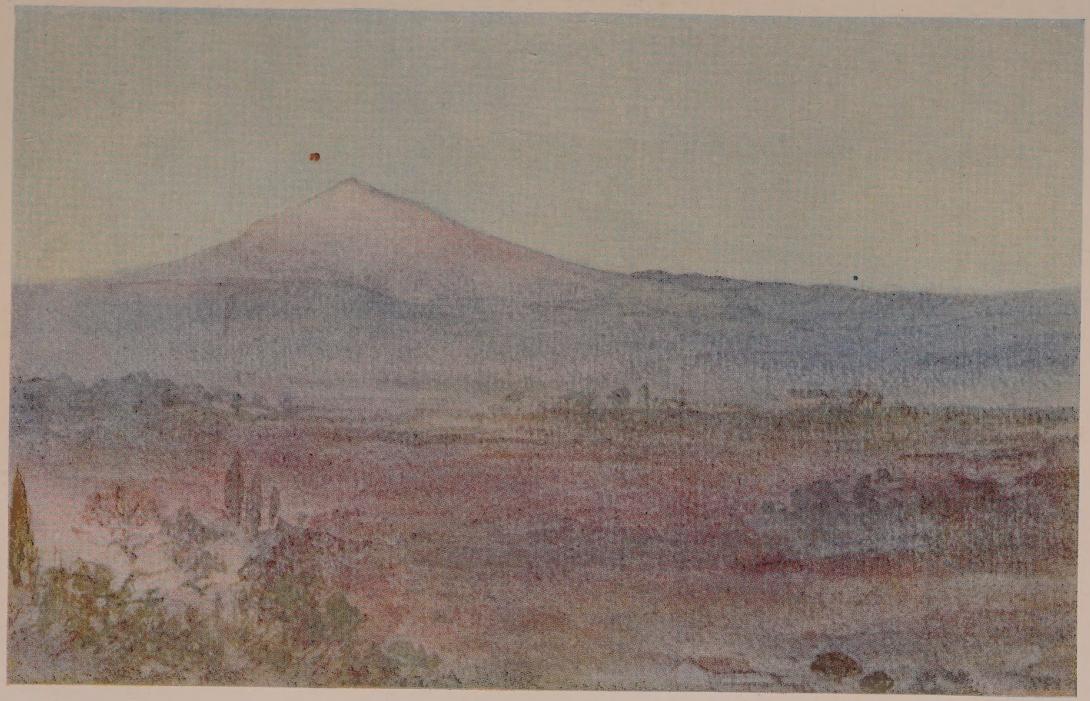
In the eighth century, when, as we have seen, the first quarrel arose between Siena and Arezzo about the jurisdiction of a convent, Siena was administered by a certain Warnefred, and it was he who founded the Abbey of S. Eugenio, known to-day, when it is no longer in the hands of religious, but a country house, as Il Ministero. It is thus possibly the most ancient abbey in all the Granducato. One climbs from the valley to reach it on its hill over the road to Grosseto, which it dominates. The situation is very splendid, and one is not

surprised to learn that it was here in 1270 the Count Guido di Montfort encamped with the army of the Guelf League only ten years after Montaperto. Guido was Vicar of King Charles of Anjou, and was intent on spoiling Siena and the *contado*. Nearly three hundred years later—in 1553—Pietro Strozzi erected fortifications here on the eve of Siena's fall. The abbey always belonged to the Benedictines, who in 1446 received here, by order of Pope Eugenius IV, the monks of Badia a Isola. The great abbey was suppressed in the eighteenth century, in much the same way as its sister house on Mont' Amiata.

To-day all we see is a fine baroque church, a few cloisters and buildings, and a magnificent villa. The church has still some treasures left, though they are fast slipping away. On either side of the nave, by the high altar, are frescoes of the Resurrection and the Crucifixion by Benvenuto di Giovanni. In the chapel, on the north side, is a picture of the Madonna and Child with Angels by Francesco di Giorgio. In the chapel on the left side there is nothing now, but till lately there hung here a fine Madonna by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. On either side the high altar are SS. Peter and Paul by Vanni; while by the west door is a dead Christ watched by two Angels by Fungai. The sacristy is a little gallery of pictures containing a spoiled Madonna by Duccio, and S. Ansano and a Bishop by Taddeo di Bartoli.

From the gardens of Il Monistero you may see many fine things—the city of Siena and Mont' Amiata—but among those within reach none finer than the tufted and lofty villa of Belcaro, dark with ilex. To reach Belcaro from Siena you must leave the city by the Porta Fontebranda, whence it is a walk or a drive of some three miles. It is certainly not further from Il Ministero, and the way is not less beautiful.

Belcaro is one of the most splendid of those fortified villas of the fourteenth century which remain to us. The Salimbeni held it in 1384, then the Marescotti; in 1482 it was ordered to be dismantled. Since then it has passed through many hands: the Bellanti have held it, and the Turamini, who



MONT' AMIATA

reduced it to a pleasure-house, building a chapel, which was painted in 1535 by Peruzzi. Fortified again in 1554 for the great siege, it was taken by the Spaniards in the same year, but not without exacting toll.

From the beautiful rampart over the age-old ilexes we have to-day one of the most splendid views of the country about Siena, with the city herself in the distance. In a small room at the end of this noble pacing is a picture of Madonna with two Saints by Matteo di Giovanni, with two Trecento panels. The frescoes of Peruzzi in the chapel have been spoilt, but in a chamber on the ground floor of the fortification is a ceiling frescoed by his hand with the Judgment of Paris.

Away to the north of Belcaro, some three miles, I suppose, to walk or drive, stands the Abbey of Lecceto, occupied in summer by the students of the Seminario of Siena. The forest of ilex which surrounded it, and from which it had its name (*lecci*), has for the most part been cut down, and, save in summer, the place is almost deserted to-day, a *contadino* and his family being its only inhabitants for three parts of the year.

But that forest was of very ancient planting and of great fame. There, it is said, the converts of S. Ansano took refuge, and in 388 S. Augustine visited it by reason of its quietness and the holy life of its hermits: while it is said that S. Monica, S. Jerome, S. Dominic, and S. Francis enjoyed its hospitality.

The place was well known, too, for its miracles; in the beginning a holy hermit, by merely touching the ground with a reed, had caused miraculous waters to spring forth and transform a desert into a fair garden, whose flowers had wonderful medicinal qualities; while here, too, were found the precious stones of Calvary, like diamonds and rubies, glistening white and rosy red, the tears and the blood of our Redeemer. Indeed, the whole place was full of mystery. The woods which surrounded it, the legends, some of them gay and delicious stories almost worthy of the "Fioretti," caused it to be considered everywhere as a reverend and holy place.

The most human, and perhaps the most characteristic, of its sons has in his "Assempri" left us many records of the place. Fra Filippo, who is Mr. Heywood's hero in his fascinating and too little known work, "The Ensamples of Fra Filippo,"[1] tells us of many of these miracles, and among them I choose, for its own sake, the following :—[2]

"In that place," says Fra Filippo, "abode very holy and virtuous friars, who were exceeding strict and fervent in the observance of the rule [the place had long been in the hands of the Augustinian Friars] and of the ceremonies. Now the Prior of the said Convent was a very holy man and venerable friar, by name Bandino dei Balzetti of Siena. And it came to pass upon a certain day at noon, the same being the time of silence when the friars were in their cells, that the blessed Fra Bandino looked, and lo! a thief had stolen the ass of the Place and was leading it away. But rather than break silence himself or cause the friars to break it, he suffered the thief to lead away that ass. Nevertheless he betook himself to the church and kneeled down before the picture of the Saviour which was above the altar, and he besought God for that thief that He would turn him to repentance and would save his soul. Now the thief had departed with the ass and had well-nigh gone forth from the Selva. But when he came to the place where he should have gone out, the ass stood still, as it had been a rock embedded in the ground; neither for all that he could do would the ass pass out of the Selva. Wherefore the thief, fearing to be overtaken, was minded to depart thence and to leave the ass. But in like manner, when he sought to go forth from the Selva, the ass became, as it were, a wall before him, and on no wise could he go go forth. Then, seeing himself in such straits, he was pricked to the heart, and he vowed a vow unto God and unto the Virgin Mary that if he were permitted to go thence he would return to that Convent and would restore the ass, and from thenceforth would amend and correct his life. And when he

[1] Published by Torrini of Siena, 1901.

[2] *Cf.* Heywood, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

had so vowed, the ass turned back of his own accord, and anon he found himself free to move. And he returned with the ass and asked for the Prior of the Place, to wit, the blessed Fra Bandino, who was prior. And to him he delivered the ass and confessed his fault with many tears and besought pardon, and he told him of the miracle which had happened. Then the blessed Fra Bandino forgave him and caused large alms to be given to him. And with much love and charity he entreated him to sin no more, but to amend his life. And when he had promised so to do he sent him away in peace."

That is but one of many such wonders; indeed, so vastly numerous became the miracles, that about 1336 the prior, in his robes, "betook himself to the place where their dead had been buried, and in the name of holy obedience charged the blessed dead to abstain from obtaining further miracles from God . . . for by reason of the vast concourse of people who besieged the convent the pious meditations of the monks were in no small degree disturbed."

By that time the place had become an embodiment of mediæval legend. It was deserted in the fifteenth century for fear of the companies of adventure, and was at last suppressed in 1810, when it was given to the Seminario Vescovile of Siena as a summer residence.

What the life of those friars was may be seen in one of the cloisters, where a series of frescoes sets forth in contrast the life of the convent and the life of the world. They are probably the work of Paolo di Maestro Neri. In another cloister are restored frescoes of the fifteenth century, in which are depicted scenes of the life of S. Augustine and again of the friars. Over the church door is another fresco, a Christ by Paolo di Maestro Neri, and some remnants of work, possibly by him, remain in the church itself, which now contains scarcely anything of interest but a tomb of some knight of the Saracini family.

S. Leonardo al Lago, a hermitage of the convent, suppressed in 1781, lies in the plain some few miles beyond. The church

there alone remains as in old time; its splendid frescoes in the choir of the Life of the Virgin are by some follower of the Lorenzetti.

The real charm, however, of Lecceto does not lie in the works of art that by chance rather than by design remain to it. We find it rather in the beauty and tranquillity of the place itself. So that, when we set out again on the road to Siena, it is after all with some regret, a real sense of loss, as though something we had loved were gone out of our lives, and we knew not whether we should find it again, or be able to reconcile ourselves to its eternal absence.

XV

ASCIANO

AS you gaze southward from the platform of Siena, from the Porta Romana or the bastion of S. Barbara, you see before you, across the narrow gardens that hem Siena in and fill all her valleys with plenteousness, a country of a very different character, that has much in common with the bare uplands about Volterra, a strong and masculine country of vast and barren undulations, of low and restless clay hills, very tragic in aspect and full of mystery.

Almost invisible at midday in the glare of the summer sun, often hidden in early morning by the mists of the valleys, this strange wilderness reveals itself only at evening, when it seems to lie like a restless sea between the city and that far away fair mountain, Mont' Amiata, whose beautiful and pure outline nothing can ever trouble or modify. Forbidding at first, little by little, as day by day, evening by evening, you gaze on that vast loneliness, it begins to attract you, to call you, to fascinate you; its little cities half-hidden here and there in the sombre billows of clay or suddenly shining out in a glint of stormy sunshine, or delicately revealed in some virginal dawn, beckon you from Siena, till at last you set out to find them where they are repeating their beautiful names—Asciano, Buonconvento, Montepulciano, Pienza, S. Quirico, Montalcino, Radicofani, Chiusi.

If you leave the fruitful heights of Siena by train to explore that wonderful desert, the first place you will come upon will be the walled town of Asciano, lying in a verdant hollow of

that barren sea of clay. Always a place of some importance, since it held the Ombrone valley, Asciano is now the chief centre of this wild district between Siena and the southern hills; for though it is far from the great Via Francigena, it is the junction of the railway system which joins Northern with Southern Tuscany, which leads from Florence and Siena to Rome, to the mountains of Umbria and the marshes of the Maremma.

The ancient capital of this strange country which now looks to Asciano was Buonconvento, on the Via Francigena, some twenty miles south of Siena. It was not through Asciano but through Buonconvento that all our fathers passed to Rome, and before our fathers those Imperial armies which so uselessly laid waste Italy. If we follow the railway, then, we shall be departing from the ancient way. But, in fact, to the leisured traveller it will make but little difference whether he traverses the mediæval highway to Buonconvento or goes by train to Asciano. In either case he must cross that region of solitude and desolation, and in either case he will find himself at last in Buonconvento. But if he journey by the road which runs almost due south out of Porta Romana he will miss Asciano, which is worth almost any trouble to see.

Arguing thus, I determined for once to follow the railway, and I was confirmed in my choice by the chance I was thus offered of a glimpse of the battlefield of Montaperto, and, better than any battlefield, of some rare pictures that I knew were hidden thereabout. So I set out by train, and it was early in the morning.

Now between Siena and Asciano the railway crosses a good part of that desert of clay hills which gives, as I think, so much of its character to Siena, and, indeed, to the Sienese. There is, and indeed there can be, but little to see: only the desert has its own beauty and strength, and may be loved at last for its own great sake. But before entering that sombre country, at some six miles from Siena the train draws up for a moment at the little wayside station of Arbia, without a village or even a house to account for it. It is there, however, you

must get out if you would visit the battlefield of Montaperto, a somewhat tiring, sentimental journey that might easily become a bore, but that on the way to the scene of the famous fight you find the Church of S. Ansano a Dofana, and close by the chapel which marks the supposed scene of the martyrdom of S. Ansano, the apostle of the Sienese.

At S. Ansano, in what was once a convent and is now a parish church, I found a fine Madonna by Baldassare Peruzzi; and it is to this sixteenth-century painter and pupil of Pacchiarotto and assistant of Pintoricchio that we owe the little chapel called Il Martirio, some quarter of a mile away to the west, which marks, as it is said, the scene of S. Ansano's martyrdom. Here I found a splendid picture, painted in 1328, by Pietro Lorenzetti, a Madonna and Child surrounded by Angels, with S. Nicholas and S. Anthony Abbot, which is worth all the fatigue of the way.

I turned away at last from this exquisite and smiling loveliness to the sombre and masculine country which lay around, and through which, after a long and useless tramp over the battlefield, I made my way back to the station. It was evening. All around me that vast and empty world whose tremendous outlines seem to express an endless domination was softened in the level light of the setting sun. On its desolate and tragic majesty a marvellous and delicate beauty seemed to have fallen from the sky, which, trembling with light, seemed to bless it and to call forth all that was best and most characteristic in that sombre strength which it alone was able to reveal and to transfigure. Everywhere around me lay that barren sea of clay, billow after billow rolling away to the horizon, broken only by the far hills. Every line and seam and channel in that desert of clay was visible in the evening light, and seemed to reveal to me for the first time the incredible age of the world. Then little by little it faded away, the merciful shadows crept up from the valleys and wrapt everything in a delicious coolness, a wonderful embrace. It was quite dark when I came to Asciano.

Asciano is a little town half-hidden in the fruitful clefts of

this desert of clay, that lies, it might seem, so restlessly between the mountains. Half-hidden in its delicious valley, it lies some distance from the railway, with which it seems to have but little in common, so little, in fact, that, as any traveller may see as he approaches by train, the line quite passes it by so close that you might drop a stone on to its roofs, yet the station is set more than a mile away from the town in a desolate place in the valley of the Bestina.

With a good thousand years of life behind her, Asciano has left us little history, and, in fact, there seems but little to know. Her story is that of most of the towns in the *contado* of Siena. From the ninth century we find the Conti Scialenghi dominating her till they were divided into various branches, and were called Manenti, Ardenghi, and Berardenghi. Of these last were the potent Cacciaconti and Cacciaguerra, and that Caccia d' Asciano whom Dante named among the luxurious fools of Siena in the twenty-ninth Inferno. In 1169 Ildebrando of the Cacciaguerra renounced his portion in Asciano to the Republic of Siena, and it was then that Asciano first came under the influence of the city, which ordered, as it is said, the destruction of the ancient fortress which stood on the highest part of the old *castello*, where now stands S. Francesco. But Asciano did not cease altogether to be under the dominion of the Scialenghi till 1212. Then in 1234 the *castello* was besieged by the Florentines, who took it. A little later it came back into the power of Siena and was refortified, as it was again in 1351. Thereafter it remained Sienese, till in 1554 it fell, with all the rest of the *contado*, into the hands of Cosimo I.

But though her story can have but little interest for us, Asciano, as we soon find, is to be loved, is to be loved for her own sake, and strictly for what she remains to-day, one of the most charming of all those delightful towns that lie like flowers on the skirts of Siena. Her situation is delicious, cosily hidden among the vineyards in the billows of the desert; her people are honest and courteous and bid you welcome, her inn is clean and humble, and, knowing nothing

of strange comforts, is all for home, and she has treasures that many a place more famous might envy.

She stands, as I have said, in a cleft of the desert. She seems, indeed, gradually to have slipt down a lowly hill-side till she should be lost in the shade of the valley. Her oldest citadel, the *castello* proper, is set on the summit of a low hill. There of old stood the fortress, where S. Francesco stands to-day. But this fortified place, called Il Prato, now in ruin, seems to have little to do with the town proper, which is some distance away, lower down the hill-side, and utterly separate from it. On the other side of Asciano, and lower still—in fact, in the bottom of this narrow cleft in the hills where it opens into the valley of the Ombrone—stands the *borgo* called Campalboli, close by the Siena gate, but in truth not joined to the true town, but separated from it by the country as the Prato is.

But the true splendour of Asciano lies in her churches, which are to be found alike in her three divisions. There is S. Agata in the town proper, the Collegiata since 1542, a fine and interesting building of the transition period. It is perhaps here that Asciano keeps her greatest treasure. For in the choir behind the high altar, on the left, is a magnificent altarpiece, an early work by Sassetta, representing the Birth of the Blessed Virgin, with scenes from her life. Mr. Berenson in his illuminating study of this painter[1] tells us that this triptych is "in all probability earlier than 1436 . . . and may even have been painted before 1430." It is certainly the earliest important work by Sassetta that has come down to us. It must have been one of the greatest and noblest works anywhere to be seen in Europe when it was new, for it is full of a sweet gravity, precision, and daintiness that still entrance us and lift up our hearts. In the midst, in a beautiful and lofty room before a cheerful fire—Brother Fire, of whom S. Francis sang, comely and joyful, masterful and strong—sits some sister, maybe of S. Anne, with the Blessed Virgin—our Life, our

[1] B. Berenson "A Sienese Painter of the Franciscan Legend" (Dent, 1909), p. 56.

Sweetness, and our Hope—in her arms. A servant warms some linen before the crackling flames, while to and fro through the sunlit room angels softly pass and repass, intent on the service of their Queen. Nor are they forgetful of S. Anne, who, still abed, is served by one of them, while another waits on guard, fascinated by the little Virgin. To the left without sits S. Joachim, talking, it may be, with the doctor, while a little lad, perhaps S. Joseph, runs in from the garden, charmingly visible, with its well and cypress and border of flowers, through an open doorway. Above are three scenes: in the midst the Madonna and Child with four Angels, to the left the death, and to the right the funeral of the Blessed Virgin. Nothing can exceed the intimate loveliness of this work.

Around the choir and guarding it, as it were, are set the four Evangelists of Fei. Then in the north transept one comes upon a fine picture by Taddeo di Bartoli of the Madonna and Child, and an Annunciation by some pupil of his, together with an altarpiece by Giovanni di Paolo and two Saints by Matteo di Giovanni. In the south transept are four Saints by a pupil of Taddeo di Bartoli, and a large fresco by some painter near to Pacchia.[1] Lastly, to the left of the main entrance is a fresco of the Pietà by some pupil of Sodoma's.

The other church within the town proper is that of S. Agostino. Here in the nave, over the second altar on the right, is a part of an altarpiece by Matteo di Giovanni, consisting of four Saints, the Annunciation, and the Blessed Trinity, with five *predelle* scenes of great beauty. The centre panel of this altarpiece, which completes it, is the great and holy treasure of the church. It stands over the high altar, and represents the Madonna and Child, and can only be seen with some ceremony. Nothing can be more lovely than this work of Matteo's, and, indeed, it is one of the finest works of the Sienese school anywhere to be found. Under the Madonna, over the high altar, is a beautiful gold Crucifix of the fourteenth century.

[1] According to Mr. Perkins.

Sassetta *Collegiata Asciano*

ALTAR-PIECE

Over the second altar, on the left in the nave, is a picture of the Nativity of much beauty, by Pietro di Domenico. Here, indeed, we see Christ born as the dawn is breaking over the hills and the angels sing in the twilight.

From S. Agostino it is, after all, but a little way back past S. Agata and along a country road up to the old *castello*, where now, instead of a fortress, S. Francesco stands. It is interesting, though mournful, to note how completely this church has been spoiled and its character changed. It was once a building in the Italian Gothic manner, such as we still find so lovely and spacious in S. Croce of Florence. It had five pointed windows on either side the nave, and between and under them the walls were covered with frescoes by Giovanni d' Asciano, some fragments of whose work are still visible. All that, however, was changed in the seventeenth century, when the windows were blocked up or squared or destroyed, the whole church was whitewashed, and six baroque altars, whitewashed, too, save where they were painted to represent marble, were set up to fill the place with their bastard splendour, the gaiety of a salon, the insincerity that marked the Catholic reaction. And so to-day the church is no longer a charming and pure country maiden, but a broken-down woman of the town, shabby and outmoded.

Nevertheless some notable and lovely things remain to it amid the ruin that fools have contrived. First there are those two wooden statues of life-size, made in the fifteenth century, representing the Annunciation, that stand on either side of the main entrance. Then there is, fairer far, the masterpiece of Lippo Memmi, a Virgin and Child with donor, which hangs at the entrance to the chapel, on the extreme south of the choir. It must be one of the loveliest things in Italy, rare and precious, and of an astonishing quality, and, like so many of the best pictures in Southern Tuscany, it has not yet—*Deo gratias*—been imprisoned in some museum or gallery, but still gladdens the simple of heart in this ruined sanctuary, where, among the debris, even yet we may pray to God.

One lingers long about S. Francesco, perhaps for the sake of the view, for from the platform before the church you may see right across the desert of clay in which Asciano lies like a little secret spring, and trace, indeed, much of the way that must presently be followed to Monte Oliveto, the great oasis and sanctuary of this wilderness.

Before setting out thither, however, I did not forget to visit the true *borgo* of Asciano, the little village called Campalboli, a few hundred yards outside the Siena gate. There in the midst I found a chapel with a fresco of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin by Benvenuto di Girolamo, and a fresco of three saints—S. Lucy, S. Roch, and S. Jerome—by the same painter. The church close by has frescoes of the Seasons by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, but I was not permitted to see them.

And having returned to the town and taken my last look at Sassetta's altarpiece in S. Agata, I made ready to set out where the road led to Monte Oliveto.

XVI

MONTE OLIVETO

IT is really on the way from Asciano to Monte Oliveto that the true character of that vague and wonderful desert that lies between the fruitful hills of Siena and the forest uplands of Mont' Amiata is revealed, its fierceness, terror, and bitterness. Its mere aspect in any large view of it cannot, I think, be better described than by likening it to one of those modelled plans in relief which are displayed in the geographical room of a museum. Like them, this country seems to have but little relation to anything we have really seen. Its vast, irregular surface, the colour of ruddy clay, restless as the sea, full of chasms, gullies, precipice and abyss, scored and channelled everywhere by the rain, and almost completely sterile, both startles the traveller by its unexpected strength and makes him afraid in its fierce desolation. It has something of the energy and splendour of the landscape Dante describes with such concentrated fury in the "Inferno," and, indeed, it may well have inspired him, for it is certain that neither at Florence nor elsewhere in his exile can he have seen anything to compare with it.

But I give altogether a wrong impression of this desert country if for one moment I have suggested that it is either mean or ugly. It is neither. On the contrary, it has a masculine and ascetic beauty to be found nowhere else in Italy, and a certain largeness and strength that constantly remind one of Castile. Moreover, on the road from Asciano to Monte Oliveto there is much of great beauty in the land-

scape beside the beauty of the desert. There is the majestic loveliness, the incomparable outline of Mont' Amiata, the bizarre and haggard splendour of Radicofani, and both these wonders burst upon one suddenly and dramatically after climbing the longest hill some half-way to the monastery.

There are many outlines of surpassing splendour in Italy: there are the hills of Cortona as seen from Montepulciano, there are Monte Cimino and Monte Venere as seen from Abbadia S. Salvatore, there are the hills of Vallombrosa as seen from Vincigliata, the whole splendour of Val d' Arno as seen from Empoli, and the Monti Pisani as seen from the leaning tower of Pisa; but there is no other outline that I have seen, even in my dreams, that may compare with that of Mont' Amiata as seen from three different points—the Porta Romana of Siena, the platform behind the Cathedral of Pienza, and this desert hill-side between Asciano and Monte Oliveto. Modern Italy has wantonly destroyed half her patrimony in a kind of pique, to humour fools or to mark what she conceives to be her "progress," whither no one knows; but not yet has she thought or been able to destroy much of the superhuman loveliness with which God has endowed her. No doubt in time, if modern society should endure—and it cannot endure—these things also will be lost to us, but that time is not yet, and, in spite of the chemical works of the valley of Spoleto, the mines of Mont' Amiata, which are slowly destroying the inhabitants, and various other brutalities that we observe from time to time, it is probable that this view will remain during our time one of the true wonders of the world.

But if one seeks destruction one has not far to go for it—only, indeed, as far as the monastery itself, hidden away among the worst precipices of this desert, which here the monks had made to blossom like the rose.

The great block of brick buildings which form the monastery, with its church, cloisters, and conventual house, are the centre of a veritable oasis in this bare country, of an oasis which little by little the desert is claiming again. For the place is

no longer a monastery, the monks having been deprived by the jealous Italian Government not only of the fruits of their labours, the houses they had built, the smiling garden they had contrived in the desert, but of the right to labour at all. Nor in robbing them has modern Italy seen fit herself to fill their place. Her policy has been, here as elsewhere, that of a mere anarchist, eager in destruction, but too often careless or incapable of construction, or even, as here, of carrying on the good work of the monks she has robbed. The Abbey of Monte Oliveto, a monastery no longer, is now a sort of pension for *forestieri*—certainly the only people who ever come here, dependent upon the Accademia delle Belle Arti of Siena. The loss is Italy's and ours; for while we as mere travellers may still find here the hospitality we seek, the Italian *contadino* and labourer are deprived of their employers; the land carefully and laboriously redeemed and cultivated by the monks has been lost, and a host of people left without employment. It is a striking spectacle, not uncommon in Italy, where the true Italians, the common people, have been more ruthlessly exploited by the middle classes, the bagmen from Piedmont, and all the riff-raff of the *risorgimento*, than anywhere else in Europe.

It was about the year 1320 that there began to rise among these barren clay hills and dreadful precipices this *Archicenobio* in which the Congregation of Olivetani had its origin. The region in which it stands, so bitter and savage and sterile, was known as the desert of Accona, and, save where the splendid labour of the monks has redeemed it, it is still an unimaginable wilderness.

The man to whom in the first place we owe the foundation of this house, so eager in its splendid work of the redemption of the soil from sterility and waste, is a certain Bernardo of the Tolomei of Siena, who fled into this solitude in the year in which Dante's Emperor, Henry VII, died at Buonconvento, not so far away, the year 1313. Bernardo was the son of Mino Tolomei, the head of the Ghibelline branch of this house, and of Fulvia Tancredi. He was born in 1272, and

seems to have been christened not Bernardo but Giovanni. As a boy he was studious and pious, and as a young man became the leader of the social life of Siena, and seems to have exercised no little influence in the politics of the Republic. It was, however, his learning which chiefly delighted his fellow-citizens, and it was indirectly his learning that was the cause of his conversion. One day, we read, as he was about to deliver a lecture on some philosophical subject to the Studio of Siena, he was struck blind. In his darkness visions came to him, and presently, after praying to the Blessed Virgin, he recovered his sight, and instead of a philosophical discourse he preached a sermon, *De Contemptu Mundi*, in which he deplored the condition of Italy, the exile of the Popes, and the general state of enmity in which the world then lay. Then, giving all he had to the poor, only retaining a few acres of barren land he possessed here in the desert of Accona, he left Siena for this bitter place with his two noble friends, Patrizio Patrizi and Ambrogio Piccolomini. The first thing they set about was the building of a tiny chapel, which they did with their own hands, and when it was finished they placed it under the protection of S. Scholastica. Then, changing his name, Blessed Bernardo began to redeem the land round about. All through that desert men heard of him and came to see him, thinking him mad. Then certain Guelfs in Siena, smelling a Ghibelline plot, tried to poison him, but he was warned from heaven of his peril, and escaped. Then both Bernardo and Ambrogio Piccolomini were accused of heresy, and summoned to Avignon. But the Pope received them with kindness, and sent them back with a recommendation to the great Bishop of Arezzo, Guido Tarlati, who at the Pope's bidding gave them the Rule and the habit of S. Benedict, and sent for the Camaldolese, who inaugurated the new Order under the name of the "Congregation of the Blessed Virgin of Monte Oliveto," and all this was confirmed by the Pope in 1319.

Now when Blessed Bernardo had achieved so much, he began to build the church and the convent we see to-day,

not without opposition, for we read that over the new buildings "the Archangel Michael and the devils renewed the war they had fought in heaven before God made the world." The Pope, who seems to have appreciated the Blessed Bernardo at his true worth, began now to send him on several missions for the reconciliation of the factions in many of the cities of Central Italy; but the noblest work of Bernardo and of his fellow-monks was accomplished in the Black Death of 1348, when, under his direction, they left the convent two by two for the different towns of the Sienese *contado*, with instructions to nurse the sick and minister to the dying, and to assemble all together in Siena two days before the Feast of the Assumption in August in their last new convent outside Porta Tufi. All assembled, as he had said, safe and sound, and he spoke with them for the last time. For the city of Siena had suffered more severely than any other place from that appalling pestilence, some eighty thousand persons dying in the city and the suburbs (*ne' borghi dentro alla città*); indeed, Tommaso Fecini tells us that out of every ten Sienese nine died, and a few days later Blessed Bernardo sickened and died also. From him their father, or from the pestilential city itself, the rest of that company also took the infection, the greater number of them dying with those they would have succoured.

Those who returned to Monte Oliveto were a remnant—a remnant, but ready to go on. They built and tilled the soil till what had been the most desolate spot in a wilderness of desolation blossomed into smiling vineyards and olive gardens and fields of corn. So that not much more than a hundred years later, in 1459, Pius II, Piccolomini, coming there in summer-time, writes of it, describing it in detail, and adding, "Happy are the monks who dwell in such a place." He remained there three days, eagerly searching for the tombs of his ancestors. Again, about a hundred years later, in 1536, the Emperor Charles V was entertained here with two thousand men. It was about this time that the church we now see was built, being added to later in 1777.

It is difficult to understand the policy of a Government which suppresses a community from whom Italy has received nothing but benefits. Nevertheless so it is, and no doubt the stupidity which has allowed this fruitful estate to return to wilderness will one day be called to account when it is too late. The last Abbot of Monte Oliveto, the holy and courteous Abbate di Negro, of the family of S. Catherine of Genoa, died in 1897. He remembered the now empty cloister and choir filled by fifty white-robed monks. And then the peasants sang in the vineyards, and the corn was golden in July and reaped with joy, and the whole country-side was glad in those days. And now?—well, now there is only a horrid silence.[1]

The chance wayfarer to-day must expect but a pitiful welcome from the few monks who remain in the convent as servants of the Government. If he wishes to sojourn there it is not as a pilgrim he must go, to visit a noble and holy place, but as an enthusiastic student of the wretched art of Sodoma, of the splendid art of Signorelli. And so he must provide himself with a ticket, which he must obtain at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Siena. Armed with this permit, which he must send to the "Sopraintendente del già Arcicenobio di Monte Oliveto Maggiore" two days in advance of his advent, he is graciously permitted, at a cost of 5 francs a day, to remain two days by the Italian Government to contemplate the wanton ruin it has contrived out of a smiling garden. The ordinary English traveller, however, seeing that he has strewn his own land with ruins more terrible by far, will make little of this. The rape of Monte Oliveto will not move him any more than murdered Glastonbury has done these three hundred years. He will wander about the tangled garden and the dying woods, and pass half-indifferently through the beautiful quiet rooms, the half-empty library (the books have for the most part been stolen and are

[1] The Olivetani have been suppressed almost everywhere, like the rest of the Orders. Their General now lives at the little monastery of Settignano. May they long be left in peace

now in Siena), and the noble cloisters. The wickedness of it, the wanton stupidity that has drained away the life of such a place in mere barbarian revenge, will probably not touch him. Be it so. He has come to see the frescoes of Signorelli and Sodoma, which, if he could but see it, are a continual and unanswerable impeachment of all he now sees going on there around him; but he is intent, if at all, on the study of art; the life of the people, brutally sacrificed to make a Roman holiday, scarcely interests him.

Well, it is to be hoped that the art he will find there, all that is left now, a mere dead corpse of what was once pulsing with life, will please and amuse him. It might seem doubtful. Signorelli's work is but a fragment, and that is not of his best, and as for Sodoma's, though there be plenty of it, it is what he has taught us to expect. It quite fills three sides of the great cloister, and makes, of course, the fame of the place.

It would be an error in criticism and a sin against that sense of the due proportion of things which is the true base of sanity, to expect from Sodoma the art, or the faith that produced the art, of Giotto. He was of the sixteenth century, a painter of great self-consciousness, and what seems to us of an intolerable insincerity, the production of the study and imitation of many masters. Even here his work is not original, but in every sense a continuation of that of a much greater painter, Luca Signorelli. And, curiously enough, what is valuable in it seems to be due to the influence of the great and heroic man who in 1497 painted here eight frescoes of the life of S. Benedict as told by Pope Gregory the Great in his "Dialogues," and then departed for Orvieto to achieve his masterpiece in the Cappella di S. Brizio of the Duomo there. Signorelli, no doubt acting under instructions from the monks, had begun in the middle of the story. It was left for Sodoma, who began to paint here in 1505, to begin and to finish the story.

Vasari, the inimitable story-teller of the Italian Painters, tells us that Sodoma "was a man of joyous life and cheerful manners, a lover of pleasure, and ever ready to contribute to

the amusement of others, even though it were not always in the most creditable manner, for which cause he obtained more than one by-name, among others that of *Mattaccio*, or the arch-fool; whereat, instead of being displeased and resenting the same, he would laugh and glorify himself—nay, he would make sonnets and *canzonetti* upon these opprobrious epithets, which songs he would then sing to the lute, and that without reserve."

He had, too, a fancy, Vasari tells us, for keeping all sorts of animals in his house—"badgers, squirrels, apes, cat-a-mountains, dwarf asses, horses and barbs to run races, magpies, dwarf chickens, tortoises, Indian doves, and other animals of similar kind—whatever he could get into his hands, in short; he was always surrounded by children and young men, in whose society he took much pleasure; and beside the animals above named he had a raven, which he had so effectually taught to speak, that this creature counterfeited his voice exactly in some things, more especially in replying to any one who knocked at the door—nay, this last he did so perfectly that he seemed to be the painter's very self, as all the Sienese well knew. The other animals also were so tame that they constantly assembled about his person while he was in the house, and came round all who approached him, playing the strangest tricks and performing the most extraordinary conceits ever seen or heard, insomuch that the dwelling of this man seemed like the very ark of Noah.

"This unusual manner of living, the strangeness of his proceedings, with his works and pictures, some of which were certainly very good ones, caused him to have such a name among the Sienese . . . that he was considered by many to be a very great man. Wherefore Fra Domenico da Leccio, a Lombard, being made General of the Monks of Monte Oliveto, and Sodoma going to visit him there, the principal abode of that Order, some fifteen miles distant from Siena, found so much to say and used so many persuasions, that he received commission to finish the stories which had been partly executed on a wall of that monastery by Luca Sig-

norelli. The subject which had been chosen was from the life of S. Benedetto, and Sodoma undertook the work for a very low price, with the addition of his expenses and that of certain boys, colour-grinders, and other assistants by whom he was attended. But the amusement which these fathers found in his proceedings while he worked in that place is not to be told; nor could one easily describe the pranks which he played there, insomuch that the monks there bestowed on him the name of *Mattaccio*, before alluded to, in requital of his follies.

"Returning to the work itself, however, Sodoma having finished certain stories in a manner which showed more readiness of hand than care and thought, the General complained of that circumstance, when *Il Mattaccio* replied that he worked according to his humour and that his pencil only danced in harmony with the sound of the coins, adding that if the General would pay more, he was quite able to produce much better work. Thereupon Fra Domenico promised to pay him better for the future, when Sodoma painted three stories, which still remained to be executed in the angles, with so much more of thought and care than he had given to the others, that they proved to be much better works."

It is perhaps doubtful where Sodoma began to work on the frescoes of the story of S. Benedict. As has been said, he followed Signorelli, whose work is concerned with the latter scenes. The narrative begins in that corner of the cloister nearest the church, but the most important paintings in the series are those in the corners of the cloisters, namely, S. Benedict leaving home, the Broken Cribble, the Temptation of the Monks, the Reception of the Novices Maurus and Placidus, and the Destruction of Monte Cassino.[1] Eugene Muntz thought that this last fresco was the first to be painted. However that may be—and it might seem almost impossible to decide the matter now—we shall take the frescoes in their narrative order, beginning with that in which S. Benedict

[1] *Cf.* R. Hobart Cust, "Giovanni Antonio Bazzi" (Murray, 1906), p. 98. This is the best and most trustworthy of all works on Sodoma.

leaves his father's house at Norcia in order to go to Rome to study. S. Benedict, the Patriarch of our Western monks, was descended from a family of note, and was born about the year 480. The history of the great Order he founded is for centuries the history of monasticism. With his advent monasticism proper may be said to have begun, for the Benedictines always have been, and are still, not only the greatest community in the Catholic Church, but its most civilizing force, its most cultured class, as it were its aristocracy. Of the five Orders of Western Christendom, then, the Benedictine stands first. Of the three Rules that of S. Benedict is the most profound, the most comprehensive. In something less than five hundred years this great Order began to produce branches of Black and White monks and nuns. Thus the Benedictine Order is the parent of every monastic Order in Europe. It is natural, then, that its remotest descendants should look behind their mediatory founders, as here the Blessed Bernardo Tolomei, to their great parent, S. Benedict himself.[1]

The first thing S. Gregory, one of the greatest of his sons, tells us of this great Saint is that he early left his father's house at Norcia to go to the Roman schools (1),[2] and it is with this incident Sodoma opens his series of frescoes in the Saint's life. We see Benedict setting out with his nurse. In Rome he acquired learning, it is true, but, disgusted at the licentiousness of his companions, he decided presently to bid the world farewell (2); and in the second of Sodoma's frescoes we see him setting forth from the Eternal City. His nurse, Cyrella, who "tenderly loved him," went with him till they came to a place called Aeside, and there she borrowed a vessel to winnow some wheat; but for negligence the vessel fell to the earth and was broken in two pieces. And Cyrella fell to weeping, and when S. Benedict saw it he had great pity, and prayed to God, and after made the vessel as whole as it had been before (3). Then they of the country took it and hung

[1] For a full explanation of the origin and development of the Religious Orders see my "Italy and the Italians" (Blackwood), p. 156 *et seq.*

[2] The numbers refer to the frescoes.

Sodoma

ST. BENEDICT RECEIVES MAURO AND PLACIDO

Monte Oliveto

it on the front of the church in witness of this fair miracle. "Then," S. Gregory tells us, "then left S. Benedict his nurse and fled secretly and came into a hermitage, where he was never known of no man but of a monk named Romanus, which ministered to him meat for to eat (4). And because that there was no way from the monastery of Romanus unto the pit where S. Benedict was, he knit the loaf in a cord and so let it down to him, and because he should hear when Romanus should let down the bread he bound a bell on the cord, and by the sound thereof he received his bread, but the devil having envy of the charity of that one and of the refection of that other, cast a stone and brake the bell, but nevertheless Romanus left not to minister to him (5). It happed that there was a priest on an Easter Day that had arrayed his dinner for himself, and our Lord appeared and said: 'Thou ordainest for thyself delicious meats, and My servant dieth for hunger in such a pit,' and named him the place. Then the priest arose and bare his meat with him, and sought so long that he found S. Benedict in great pain. When he had found him he said to him: 'Arise now and take thy meat and refection, for it is Easter Day' (6). . . . It happed after this that a black bird that is called a merle came on a time to S. Benedict and pecked with his bill at his visage, and grieved and noyed him so much that he could not put it from him, but as soon as he had made the sign of the cross anon the bird vanished away (7). After that came to him a great temptation of the flesh, by which the devil tempted him in showing him a woman, and he burnt sore and was inflamed n his courage, but anon he came again to himself (8). . . . It happed that the abbot of a monastery was dead, and for the good tendance of this holy man S. Benedict, all the monks of the abbey gave their voices and elected S. Benedict for their abbot (9), but he accorded not thereto nor agreed to them, for he said that his conditions and manners were not according to theirs. Notwithstanding, he was vanquished, and so instantly required that at the last he consented. But when he saw they lived not nor were ruled according to

their religion and Rule, he reproved and corrected them vigorously. And when they saw that they might not do their wills under him, they gave him venom meddled with wine for to drink, but S. Benedict made the sign of the cross over it and blessed it, and anon the vessel brake in pieces, which are of glass (10). . . . Then went S. Benedict again into the desert, where God showed him many signs and miracles, and founded there twelve abbeys.

"Now it happened that in one of the abbeys was a monk that might not endure long in prayers, and when the other of his fellows were in prayer he would go out of the church. Then the abbot of that abbey showed this to S. Benedict, and anon he went to see if it were true. And when he came he saw that the devil in likeness of a little black child drew him out of the church by his cowl. Then S. Benedict said to the abbot and to S. Maur [the reception of S. Maur and S. Placidus is not recounted by S. Gregory, but is included by Sodoma (12)]: 'See you not him that draweth him out?' They said: 'Nay.' Then said he: 'Let us pray to God that we may see him.' When they had made their prayer, S. Maur saw him, but the abbot might not see him. The next day S. Benedict took a rod and beat the monk, and then he abode in prayer like as the devil had been beaten, and durst no more come and draw him away, and from then further he abode in prayer and continued therein (13).

"Of the twelve abbeys that S. Benedict had founded three of them stood on high rocks, so that they might have no water but by great labour (11). Then came the monks to him and prayed him that he would set these abbeys in some other place because they had great default of water. Then went S. Benedict about the mountains, and made his orisons and prayers much devoutly; and when he had long prayed he saw three stones in a place for a sign, and on the morn, when the monks came for to pray, he said to them: 'Go ye to such a place where ye shall find three stones, and there dig a little, and ye shall find water—our Lord can well provide for you water.' And they went and found the mountains all sweating

where as the three stones were, and there they digged, and anon they found water so great in abundance that it sufficed to them and ran down from the top of the hill unto beneath into the valley (14).

"It happed on a time that a man hewed bushes and thorns about the monastery, and his axe or instrument of iron that he hewed with sprung out of the helve and fell into a deep water; then the man cried and sorrowed for his tool, and S. Benedict saw that he was sore anguished therefor, and took the helve and threw it after into the pit, and anon the iron came up and began to swim till that it entered into the helve (15).

"In the abbey was a child named Placidus, which went to the river for to draw water, and his foot slid, so that he fell into the river, which was deep, and anon the river bare him forth more than a bow-shot. And when S. Benedict, which was in his study, knew it, he called S. Maur, and said that there was a child, which was a monk, that was being drowned, and bade him go to help him. And anon S. Maur ran upon the water like as it had been on dry ground, and his feet dry, and took up the child by the hair, and drew him to land, and after, when he came to S. Benedict, he said that it was not by his merit, but by virtue of his obedience" (16). The next fresco (17) tells of the drunken monk who saw the devil issue forth from a bottle. It is not recounted by S. Gregory.

"There was a priest named Florentius which had envy of S. Benedict, and he sent him a loaf of bread envenomed (18). After, when S. Benedict had this loaf, he knew by the inspiration that it was envenomed. He gave it to a raven that was wont to take his feeding of S. Benedict's hand, and commanded him to bear it unto such a place that no man should find it. Then the raven made semblant for to obey to the commandment of S. Benedict, but he durst not touch it for the venom, and fled about it howling and crying. . . . When this priest, Florentius, saw that he could not slay S. Benedict, he enforced him to slay spiritually the souls of his disciples. He took seven maidens, all naked, and sent them into the

garden to dance and carol for to move the monks to temptation (19). When S. Benedict saw the malice of Florentius he had fear of his disciples and sent them out of that place."

The next fresco (20), perhaps by Riccio, recounts how S. Benedict sent S. Maur to France and Placidus to Sicily. S. Gregory omits this incident. There follow the frescoes by Signorelli (21–28).

"Now, when Florentius saw that S. Benedict and his monks went out, he demened great joy and made great feast, and anon the *solar* [the upper chamber] fell upon him and slew him suddenly (21). When S. Maur saw that Florentius was dead, he ran after S. Benedict, and called him, saying: 'Come, for Florentius is dead.' When S. Benedict heard this he was sorry for the perilous death of Florentius, and because S. Maur was glad for the death of his enemy, as him seemed, he enjoined him penance therefor.

"After this he went to Monte Cassino (22). . . . It happed on a time that as the monks should lift a stone for a work of an edifice they might not move it, then there assembled a great multitude of people, and yet they all might not lift it, but anon as S. Benedict had blessed it, they lifted it anon. Then apperceived they that the devil was upon it, and caused it to be so heavy (23). And when they had a little made the wall high, the devil appeared to S. Benedict, and bade him go see them that edified. Then S. Benedict sent to his monks and commanded that they should keep them well, for the devil went to destroy them. But ere the messenger came to them the devil had thrown down a part of the wall, and had therewith slain a young monk. Then they brought the monk all to bruised in a sack to S. Benedict, and anon S. Benedict made upon him the sign of the cross, and blessed him and raised him to life, and sent him to the work again (24). A layman of honest life had a custom once in the year to come to S. Benedict all fasting, and on a time as he came there was one that bare meat accompanied with him, and desired that he would eat with him, but he refused it. After, he

prayed him the second time, and yet he refused it, and said he would eat no meat till he came to S. Benedict. At the third time he found a fair fountain, and a much delitable place, and began sore to desire him to eat with him, and at the last he consented and ate. And when he came to S. Benedict, he said to him: 'Where hast thou eaten?' Which answered, 'I have eaten a little.' 'O, fair brother, the devil hath deceived thee, but he could not deceive thee the first nor the second time, but the third time he hath surmounted thee.' Then the good man knelt down to the feet of S. Benedict, and confessed him of his trespass (26).

"Attila, the King of Goths, would once prove if S. Benedict had the spirit of prophecy, and sent to him his servant, and did so array him with precious robes, and delivered to him a great company as he had been the king himself. When S. Benedict saw him come, he said to him: 'Fair son, do off that thou wearest, it is not thine,' and the man fell down anon to the ground because he mocked the holy man, and died anon" (27).

The next fresco shows us Benedict receiving the king himself (28), an incident not recounted by S. Gregory. Through the next fresco, the last of Signorelli's, a doorway has been cut. Sodoma continues the series with S. Gregory's prophecy of the destruction of Monte Cassino (29). There follow six frescoes, five of which follow S. Gregory closely:—

"It happed over all Champagne, whereas he dwelt, that so great a famine was in the country that much people died for hunger. Then all the bread of the abbey failed, and there was within but five loaves for all the convent; when S. Benedict saw that they were abashed, he began debonairly to chastise and warn them that they should have their hearts on high to God, and said to them: 'Wherefore are ye in so great misease for bread? If ye have none this day, ye shall have it to-morrow.' Now it happed that on the morrow they found at their gate two hundred muddes of meal which were properly sent from God, for never man wist from whence they came. When the monks saw that they thanked God,

and learned that they ought not doubt nor of abundance nor of poverty (30).

"It happed on a time that S. Benedict sent his monks for to edify an abbey, and said that at a certain day he would come see them and show them what they should do. Then the night before that he had said to come, he appeared to the master and to his monks, and showed to them all the places that they should build, but they believed not this vision, and supposed it had been but a dream. Then when they saw that he came not, they returned and said to him: 'Fair father, we have abided that thou shouldst have come to us like as thou promisedst us.' Then answered he: 'What is that ye say? Remember ye not that I appeared to you that night that I promised you, and enseigned and told how ye should do? Go your way, and do in such wise as I have devised to you in the vision' (31).

"There were two nuns nigh unto his monastery which were of much noble lineage, which were much talkative and restrained not well their tongues, but tormented overmuch him that governed them. And when he had showed this to S. Benedict, he sent them word that they should better keep silence and rule their tongues or he would curse them. But they for all that would not leave it, and so anon after they died and were buried in the church. And when the deacon cried in the end of the Mass that they that were accursed should go out of the church, the nurse that had nourished them, and that every day had offered for them, beheld and saw that, when the deacon sang so, they issued out of their sepulchres and went out of the church, and when S. Benedict knew hereof he offered for them himself and assoiled them. Then, after that, when the deacon said so as afore, they never issued out after as their nurse had seen them (32).

"There was a monk gone out for to see his father and mother without licence and blessing of his abbot, and the day after he came thither he died; and when he was buried in the earth, the earth cast him out again, and so it did twice. Then came the father and mother to S. Benedict, and told him how

the earth threw him, and would not receive him, and prayed that he would bless him. Then took he the Blessed Sacrament, and made It to be laid on the breast of the corpse, and when they had done so they buried him, and the earth threw him no more out, but received the body and held it (33).

"There was a monk that could not abide in the monastery, and prayed so much to S. Benedict that he let him go, and was all angry, and anon, as he was out of the abbey, he found a dragon with open mouth; and when he saw him he had fear that he would have devoured him, and cried loud: 'Come hither and help me! Come hither, for this dragon will devour me!' Then the monks ran, but they saw no dragon, and brought again the monk trembling and sighing. Then the monk promised that he would never depart from the abbey" (34).

The last fresco (35) tells how S. Benedict, with a look, broke the chains of a peasant that some knights had bound. It is not related by S. Gregory.

Thus ends this great legend, as we have it now, without relating the death of S. Benedict or his visit to S. Scholastica. But other frescoes are still under the whitewash on the stairs leading to the smaller cloister.

Whatever we may think of these works, and assuredly fine as Signorelli's work is, fine as some of Sodoma's work may be, they cannot compare for beauty or for simplicity with the work of Giotto in Padua, or in the Maddalena Chapel at Assisi or in the Upper Church of S. Francesco there, or with the work of Simone Martini in the same church in the chapel of S. Martino. What Vasari has to tell us of Sodoma's work here, inaccurate as it proves to be, seems to be authentic in so far as it suggests that the master did not take himself very seriously. One cannot paint the life of a saint with the unction of a Simone or a Sassetta, and at the same time care so little for one's work that one does it well or ill according to the price offered. "To do despite to the General and the monks," Vasari tells us, "Sodoma depicted the story of the priest Fiorenzo, the enemy of S. Benedetto, who brought a

number of public dancing-women to sing and frolic around the monastery of that holy man, thereby to tempt and disturb the devotions of the fathers. In this story Il Mattaccio, who was as eccentric in painting as in other actions of his life, exhibited a dance of nude figures which was altogether offensive, and, as he knew that this would not be permitted, he refused to let any of the monks see his work while it was in progress. When this story was uncovered, the General at once commanded that it should be instantly destroyed and done away with, but Mattaccio, after much idle talk, and seeing that the father was in great anger, added draperies to all the figures in the picture, which is among the best of those to be found in the Monte Oliveto."

No, it is not in this spirit, nor by such a mountebank, that great works of art are achieved. What there is of splendour here we owe to Signorelli, even in the work of Sodoma.

That cloister so genuinely famous is, however, by no means all there is to be seen at Monte Oliveto. The church is unfortunately of the seventeenth century, and contains little of interest; only, indeed, the stalls by Fra Giovanni da Verona, brought hither in 1815 from S. Benedetto of Siena to replace those taken in 1813 to the Duomo. But the Library is charming, with its few books bound in white, a noble room with an antechamber reached by a flight of steps, at the further end, where are two ancient pictures: one a Madonna by some painter near to Segna, the other a S. Bernardino, possibly by Francesco di Giorgio.

It is, however, in the convent itself, its cells and corridors and offices, that we shall take most delight, in the conversation of the few monks who are left, not to serve God but us, and in the ruined gardens and *bosco* that still offer us flowers and shade in the long summer days. And wandering there, we still find remnants, not merely among the flowers, of the ancient sweetness and beauty that must once have filled the place as with some perfect plain-song. Over the entrance tower, for instance, we find still Madonna enthroned with her

little Son—a polychrome terra-cotta from the hand of Giovanni della Robbia. The companion figure of S. Benedict on the other side is only a work of the *atelier*, but it is charming nevertheless.

It is with such things as these, with the old blessed silence, the same great landscapes about us, and the kindly company of the good monks that we must try to reconcile ourselves to what we have lost for the sake of United Italy. And since it is manifestly impossible that we should regret the price we have had to pay all over Italy for so truly splendid, so obviously noble, incorruptible, and heroic a thing, we shall gladly remember that we have not yet realized all that is to be demanded of us by those who, battening on the body, bruised and bleeding, of her we have loved, call themselves her sons.

XVII

TO RAPOLANO, SERRE, AND LUCIGNANO

IN journeying southward from Siena before the advent of the railway two roads lay open to the traveller: the ancient and most direct road to Rome, the Via Francigena, which followed the Arbia till it was lost in the Ombrone at Buonconvento, and the road that left Siena by the Porta Ovile and passed slowly down into the Val di Chiana at Rapolano. The first notable town after leaving Siena, then, for our forefathers was Buonconvento or Rapolano. The railway has changed all this, and has made Asciano, in its secret green valley, with its quiet inn, its beautiful churches, and its pictures, the real point of departure for us in any journey southward from Siena. For Asciano to-day is not only, as I have said, the centre of the railway system which serves Southern Tuscany, but is also the key to the Val dell' Ombrone and the pass there to the Val di Chiana. Of old, so far as Siena was concerned, either Buonconvento or Asciano held the Ombrone valley, the one where it met the Val d' Arbia, the other at its head. The town of Lucignano held the Val di Chiana, and the key to the pass between the valleys was Rapolano. The position that Asciano holds will thus become plain when I say that from thence we may journey by train south-west to Buonconvento on the Grosseto line, or south-east through Rapolano and Lucignano into the Chiana valley to Chiusi on the line to Rome. We can then from Asciano choose our route southward; we can either

explore the Ombrone valley and so make our way to Grosseto, or we can explore the Chiana valley and so come at last to Chiusi, on the verge of Umbria. In either case we shall end at last at the foot east or west of Mont' Amiata, which dominates the whole region. The road I propose to follow leans rather to the second of these ways than to the first. From Asciano I prefer to go to Rapolano and so into Val di Chiana, stopping short, however, of Chiusi at Montepulciano, and crossing the hills by Pienza to S. Quirico d' Orcia, and coming into the Val dell' Ombrone at Torrenieri. I followed this route merely for its convenience, because it led me best through Southern Tuscany and with the least return upon my way.

So I made my way back from Monte Oliveto to Asciano at evening, and the next morning early I set out by train for Rapolano.

Strictly speaking in the Valle dell' Ombrone, Rapolano is the key to the pass from that valley into the Chiana. It is an ancient walled town still beautiful, with ruined fortifications and vast gates, possessing of old, and now too, medicinal baths which have a great reputation in this part of Tuscany. Its most ancient possession, however, is its *pieve* of S. Vittorio—like all ancient *pievi*, not within the *paese*, but at the foot of the hill on which the little town stands. It existed in the eighth century, and appears in the first quarrel between Siena and Arezzo;[1] but in 1776 the church was abandoned and the *pieve* translated to the church of S. Maria Assunta, in the midst of the town, originally an abbey of Olivetan monks, which now bears the name of S. Vittorio in S. Maria Assunta.

Rapolano originally made part of the lordship of the Berardenga and of the Scialenga of Asciano. But as early as 1175 some of its *signori* placed it under the protection of Siena. About thirty years later, in 1208, the Florentine chroniclers tell us that their compatriots took the place, as they certainly did in 1253. In 1260, however, the battle of

[1] See *supra*, p. 77.

Montaperto restored Rapolano to the Sienese, but in the meantime the town had acquired Guelf sympathies, and in 1266, according to Andrea Dei, the Sienese occupied it to suppress these rebels, who held the *castello*. In 1306 Ghibelline Arezzo attempted to seize it, no doubt on account of its strategical importance, and the Sienese, who were quite unable to defend it, destroyed its walls. It can have had no very considerable place in the confused history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when all Central Italy lay under the terror of the *condottieri*, and its fate, like that of every other city in the Sienese *contado*, was finally sealed in 1554, when it was sacked by the Austro-Spanish-Medicean army, and a little later included in the Granducato.

Its only interest for us to-day lies in the treasures of art it may possess. Nor are we disappointed in it, for in the little Church of the Fraternità, over the pulpit, hangs an old panel of the Madonna and Child by Pietro Lorenzetti (?). In the Church of S. Vittorio hung two pictures that after much search my companion and I at length discovered in the Syndic's house, though what they were doing there or how they came there is more than I can say. The better of the two is one of the finest pictures of the Sienese school in all Tuscany, a Madonna and Child with S. Sigismondo and S. Antonio Abate by Neroccio, that rare and exquisite master; the other is a S. Anthony of Padua by Cozzarelli. Charming as Rapolano is, one does not linger there, for there is no good inn, and there is much to see in the country round about.

At Serre, for instance, a little town in a cleft of the hills some five miles south of Rapolano, in the *pieve* there, is a fine picture of the Madonna and Child on a gold ground by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Few, indeed, visit this little place, so difficult of access and quite off the highways of travel; but it is in such places, and in such places only, that Italy still lives. Not in the rascaldom of the cities which live on the curiosity of the foreigner and seek to exploit, while they daily dis-

member, that Italy which they have murdered, but in such quiet places as Serre will you find all that is left of the spirit which has made our world so sweet. Happily there are many such places left to us as a refuge even in Tuscany in these days that see us so surely clanging back into barbarism.

I returned to Rapolano towards evening, and took train for Lucignano, a journey of some twenty minutes or so. The railway passed quite round Rapolano, and offered me a complete view of its walls, its gates, and terraced gardens. And after passing Poggio S. Cecilia [1] on the left, another of the Berardenga *castelli*, I found I had left the barren country of clay hills that lies about Asciano, and had entered a deliciously wooded valley full then of an evening peace. Presently, in the serene and golden light, the *castello* of S. Gimignanello came into sight on the right. S. Gimignanello, too, was part of the lordship of the Counts of the Scialenga, a picturesque place of towers. Then at last the valley opened as far as the eye could see; the great plain of the Chiana, drained now, rich and healthy, stretched away between the great hills, on one of which, at the very head of the valley, Lucignano was firmly set, a fine towered city aloft on her hill.

It cannot be less than five miles from the station of Lucignano to the town, and it is uphill all the way; but the place is worth all your trouble to reach it, if only for the great view which greets you from the gate, whence you may see the vast and beautiful line of the Apennines across the great valley, and the city of Cortona, like a white flower, on the skirts of those wonderful but terrible hills. There, too, for the first time something new comes into the landscape, a new spirit or atmosphere, something soft and mysterious, a light that never was on any Tuscan hills—and, indeed, it is Umbria that lies there before you, secret and yet visible in every line of the hills, in the sweetness of the valleys, in the mystery of the mountains. Something hard and severe has suddenly gone out of the landscape, and the dryness of

[1] See note 8, p. 329 *infra*.

Tuscany is behind you and you look once more on Umbria and the great and beautiful hills, dark with ilex and chestnut, through which run the mysterious, soft valleys of the Saints, where S. Francis and Blessed Angela pass and repass, lingering yet, and seem to stand for something in the world, for something, perhaps, we have lost for ever and can spare so ill.

Lucignano, thus so nobly placed, was, as I have said, at one time a *castello* of very great importance to Siena, for it commanded the Val di Chiana where the confines of the Republic marched with those of Arezzo. Its situation is, in fact, magnificent, for it stands on the highest point of a vast bastion of high land that is thrown out by the Chianti hills, dividing the great valley here into two parts. It thus enjoys for our delight one of the widest prospects of the beautiful valley of the Chiana, and from its gates we may see almost all the cities, towns, *castelli*, and villages with which that vast plain is peopled.

With all its splendour of situation, however, the *castello* of Lucignano does not appear to be of very ancient foundation, not older, indeed, than the thirteenth century, when, although it seems to have enjoyed a great measure of self-government, it was a civil and religious dependent of Arezzo, that city which is set under the hills at the head of the main Chiana valley where it meets the Val d' Arno. So securely does the power of Arezzo seem to have been established in the place, that a month after Montaperto (1260) we find the Bishop Guglielmo Uberti, then at the head of the government of that city, signing a decree in Lucignano in October, 1260. After the victory of Campaldino (1289), however, in which the Florentines, with the Sienese and other allies, defeated the Aretines, Lucignano was handed over to the Sienese, and this was confirmed in the Church of S. Francesco, outside Lucignano, in June, 1289. It proved to be the worst day's work that had yet been done for Lucignano. Even from the first the sympathies of the people of Lucignano seem to have been with Arezzo, and even so late as 1336 Giovanni Villani

speaks of the place as Lucignano d' Arezzo, which seems to prove at least that the hold of Siena was disputed.

In 1337 Lucignano came into the power of Perugia, and in 1355 she was still Perugian, and in 1357 formed an important Perugian outpost in the war with Siena. Then in 1370, in Perugia's war with the Pope, she gave herself to Siena,[1] but the hired *condottieri* in 1384 sold her to Florence. Indeed, the place, small as it was, a mere fortress in the eyes of the contending parties, was doomed to captivity. In desperation, to save themselves from slavery, in 1390 the people of Lucignano placed themselves, their town, and its territories under the protection of the Visconti of Milan, the most bitter enemies of Florence. This led to their coming again under the jurisdiction of Siena, and the conditions then imposed by that Republic are very interesting as an example of what Siena conceived to be the right way to govern a subject people.

In the first place Siena insisted that the *castello* and the territory of Lucignano should allow that they were for ever under the jurisdiction of her Commune; then that the subject town should receive as Potestà a citizen of Siena, whom she should pay every six months 400 florins of gold; that every year she would send to the Duomo of Siena for the Feast of the Assumption a *palio* of scarlet of the value of at least 60 florins, accompanied by eight guards, each of whom should be furnished with a candle of a pound weight; that each year she would buy from Siena 600 bushels of salt at the price of 30 *soldi* the bushel; that she would permit the Commune of Siena to build a fortress within her territory; that she would pay every year to the Republic 300 florins of gold as tribute; that she would not exact *pedagium* from the citizens of Siena; that she would permit all Sienese merchandise to pass freely between the two Communes; that all her landholders and citizens now and ever should become Sienese citizens; that all her notaries should now and ever matriculate in the University of Siena.

[1] See W. Heywood, "A History of Perugia" (Methuen, 1910), pp. 168, 217, etc.

As for the *castello*, or fortress, mentioned in this convention, it was built by a certain Bartolo Bartoli within three years at a cost of 6,825 florins. And we find that the dominion of the Sienese was confirmed by a treaty with Florence in 1404.

I have given the convention which ensured the rule of Siena in Lucignano in some detail because it allows us to see exactly what the rule of Siena was like in her *contado*.[1] That rule seems to have been as disastrous as it was short-sighted. Lucignano was to be ruled solely for the benefit of Siena. Here is the failure in little of all modern Continental Europe in the government of subject peoples. Siena ruled her *contado* not for its own good, but for hers. Lucignano had to pay yearly a large tribute, as well as vast taxes. Her trade was circumscribed and handicapped for the sake of Siena. The result might have been foreseen if the Sienese had had any aptitude for government. But those who cannot rule themselves are not likely to succeed with others. Instead of strengthening the cities under her rule, and so raising a strong and even an impregnable bulwark of prosperity, contentment, and loyalty against the enemy, Siena quietly strangled, for purely selfish ends, every city that came within her grasp. Lucignano is but the figure of them all.

As the fifteenth century advanced the population of Lucignano decreased, and with its population went whatever wealth had once belonged to it. These evils had grown to such proportions in 1440, when after only thirty-six years of Sienese rule the population had decreased by half, that the wretched town tried to obtain a diminution of the tribute and of the tax. But it was the whole system, the whole point of view, that was at fault. However, Siena conceded the request—a fact which in itself speaks for the state of affairs—to this extent, that Lucignano was to pay 1,000 *lire* a year instead of 400 florins, and the 300 florins of tribute were reduced to 100 on condition that the other 200 were spent in repairing the walls and the gates; the 600 bushels of salt were also reduced to 300.

[1] See note 9, p. 330.

After considering this example of her government we are not surprised that the Austro-Spanish troops had so easy a victory. When the Imperial army took Lucignano in 1553 there can have been little to boast of in the exploit.

No one, I think, who has once seen Lucignano would willingly pass her by again without paying her a visit. Her splendid situation, her quiet country aspect, her green hill-side, her cypresses, her spring of water make the place a paradise quite apart from anything else she may possess. But it is impossible that so alluring a citadel should be quite devoid of pictures, those true wild-flowers of Italy: and if there be such a place in all Tuscany it is certainly not Lucignano.

The old Church of S. Francesco, where, as we have seen, the Bishop Guglielmo Uberti of Arezzo signed a decree in October, 1260, is full of works of the Sienese school—frescoes by Bartolo di Fredi, by Pietro di Giovanni, by Fungai, and Signorelli.

On the south wall is a fresco by Bartolo di Fredi of the Triumph of Death, and on the same side of the church over the third altar a Madonna and Child which Mr. Perkins gives to Luca Signorelli. It is a late work, but not without something of the fervour and beauty of all the master's work. Over the high altar is a splendid polyptych of the Madonna and Child with Saints by Bartolo di Fredi. In the choir is a fine fresco by Fungai of S. Francis receiving the Stigmata. Then in the north transept we find more of Bartolo di Fredi's work—frescoes of scenes from S. Francis's Life, the Madonna and Angels, S. George and S. Christopher, and the Adoration of the Magi.

Over the second altar in the nave on the north side is another fresco by the same master—the Madonna and Child with Angels. Here, too, is Pietro di Giovanni's panel of S. Bernardino trampling on three episcopal mitres, the mitres of the sees he had been offered, painted in 1448.

Charming and lovely as all these works are, as indeed I find all the work of that time when we still believed in God

and put our trust in other things than electric trams and such-like trumpery to have been, it is Lucignano itself that I love, that every time I toil up to it seems to me more perfectly delightful because it is so completely itself. A little place scarcely worth a visit, the tourist may think: a little place scarcely worth improving off the face of the earth, the modern Italian doubtless murmurs as he passes by down the valley in a train too wretched for any other land, in a service so arranged that it is impossible to arrive almost anywhere without a journey of many hours. *Benedicamus Domino* say I. Lucignano remains to us while too much that we have loved has gone down into the modern *limbo*. Let them vent their hatred of all that is noble and beautiful, of all that draws to their country the universal love of mankind: we know they will pass with all their unspeakable works, and their place shall know them no more. Meanwhile there remain to us these little places fair and lovely, too humble to excite their cupidity or to ensure them the infamous publicity they covet and find in the destruction of the once famous cities. Let us treasure these, and remind ourselves of them amid the model dwellings of Florence where no one could be at peace, or amid the ghastly ruin that was Rome.

XVIII

TO SINALUNGA, FOIANO, AND TORRITA

FROM Lucignano, from the station of Lucignano to the station of Sinalunga is but ten miles, but from thence to the town is a good half-hour's walk. Yet let us rejoice that this little hill-town is not nearer the railway, for it has thus been able to keep something of its ancient character, its old-world air, and what beauty the centuries have left it. As for the town itself, it is not among the more beautiful places of Tuscany, but it is set in so fine a landscape, it is surrounded by so lovely a country-side, it is piled up so loftily on its strangely contorted hill and overlooks so noble and so splendid a world, that, in spite of the fact that for the moment it can boast of no inn that any one would wish to sleep in, it must never be omitted in any journey through this delicious valley.

The birthplace of Ghino di Tacco, the famous brigand, of whom Boccaccio tells us in the Second Tale of the Tenth Day of the "Decameron," and whom we shall meet again at Radicofani, Sinalunga is a curious little nondescript and sun-baked *castello* set on a high hill in a delicious world of vineyard and olive garden on the western bastion of the Val di Chiana. Reached from the railway by a long winding and delightful road, to which, according to Repetti, it owes its name Sinalungo—*Sinus longus*, or as it became later Asinalunga—it is but rarely visited by travellers, and the one inn it

possessed, and that a good one, has for the time being closed its doors.

Very few memories have come down to us concerning the place earlier than the twelfth century, when it formed a part of the dominion of the Conti della Scialenga, who presently brought it into the power of Siena, against which city it twice rebelled in 1313 and in 1322. But after the defeat of the Compagnia del Capello near Torrita, its neighbour, in 1363, Sinalunga finally came into the dominion of the Republic, the counts in 1343 having sold to the town all their property and rights in it for some 2,250 gold florins. Then in 1399, when the Sienese for fear of Florence handed over the government of their city and its *contado* to Visconti of Milan, who certainly hoped to add Tuscany to his dominions, Sinalunga as part of that *contado* came into his power. In the year 1400 he built a great tower, called La Torre, which was destroyed by lightning in 1563, but by then Sinalunga, like all its neighbours, had for ten years been in the hands of Cosimo I, and not much later it made part of the Granducato.

The ruins of La Torre, however, remained till 1590, when Grand-Duke Ferdinando I pulled them down and used them to build the new *pieve* of S. Martino, giving the ground thus laid bare for a public piazza, the great Piazza we find to-day in the loftiest part of the town before the *pieve* or Collegiata. The old *pieve*, like all those of Tuscany, lies without the town at the foot of the hill on which it stands, and may still be seen with its *borgo* a little to the south of the railway station beside the winding road by which we reach Sinalunga. It was dedicated to S. Pietro, and in 1591 by a Bull of Clement VIII all its rights passed to the new Collegiata.

These dull facts will perhaps appeal but little to the traveller who, on his way through this part of Tuscany, has had the courage to visit Sinalunga for the sake of the pictures Mr. Berenson or some article by that devoted student and hunter of Sienese pictures, Mr. Perkins, has told him he will surely find there. But let him have patience. Pictures there

are and to spare in this neglected town, but even to-day in the vulgar rush hither and thither of poor people who have no time to do anything gently, it would be unpardonable to take even Sinalunga by assault without some sort of introduction. Indeed, if it is thus we are to be compelled to visit the cities of our second fatherland they will lose half their interest for us; and as for their pictures, they might as well share the fate of their brethren and be imprisoned in those vast emporiums called Museums, where much the same crowd hustles and gapes as you may find at the entertainment of Barnum and Bailey. No picture howsoever lovely, howsoever holy and divine, can survive a single month in such an asylum as the Uffizi or the Academy of Siena. In some way, I know not rightly why, they fade and die there as in an intolerable captivity. Perhaps, like ourselves, these living and lovely beings which we are so powerless to create strike roots as we do into their native earth, or into that place to which love has brought them which they have learned to regard as home. Perhaps in the cold corridors of a Museum they miss the prayers of the poor, the tears of the sorrowful, the thanks of those they have often assisted, the laughter of little children. Certainly there is here some mystery we cannot wholly understand. Only we know that, however carefully we bear it away from its altar, that triptych, that panel, that picture of the Madonna will in its new place presently suffer some change, will seem to fade and die; and in delivering up to us, to the curious, cold eyes of the connoisseur, or the crowd what they think to be its secret it will suddenly move us no more, will tell us no longer of heavenly things, or interpret for us the dumb poetry of our hearts, but like a dead body in a dissecting-room will tell us only those secrets which the corpse retains when the soul has vanished whither we cannot follow.

And since this is so, it is delightful to find no picture gallery or museum in Sinalunga, it is infinitely reassuring to know that pictures which have been here these hundreds of years remain to her to be worshipped, to be loved, to receive the prayers of the poor, and to figure for them what the wicked-

ness of the rich and the stupidity of the learned have left of divinity in their hearts.

Now certainly what we should do first in Sinalunga after climbing into that lofty piazza before the Church of S. Martino from the station is to wander through the narrow ways of the town, to visit the fine Palazzo Pubblico, to linger on the olive-clad bastions, and to wonder at the beauty that is surely to be found there. And when you have thus lifted up your heart you may find again all your desire in the churches, in that Church of S. Martino which was built out of the ruins of La Torre, as I have said, in S. Lucia and S. Croce in the Madonna delle Nevi, and S. Bernardino.

And let us take these things in order. In S. Martino, besides the curious little shrine to the right of the western doors there is over the altar of the south transept a fine altarpiece of the Deposition, probably from the hand of Girolamo del Pacchia. Pacchia was the pupil of Fungai, and passed under the influence of many masters, Florentine as well as Sienese. His work has the usual composite quality of the sixteenth century, but here for once I think—or is it just my fancy?—he has brought something almost divine into a picture that but for that would be a little mannered, a little lacking in sincerity. In a wide and beautiful valley where afar off we seem to recognise the beautiful lines of Monte Cetona and Mont' Amiata, the cross itself hiding the height of Radicofani, Jesus our Saviour has been lifted from the Tree and now lies in His Mother's lap supported by the Holy Women, while S. John carefully lifts away the crown of thorns from His brow, and S. Joseph of Arimathea and Simon of Cyrene wait in the background, the one with the precious ointment for His burial, the other with the holy relics—the instruments of the Passion—which he holds in his hands. And lo! though yesterday it was almost summer, it is bleak winter now; the little trees stand forlorn, stripped of their leaves, and all the world is bare and still with the stillness of death awaiting the Resurrection. Beneath the picture are seven *predella* panels, a Crucifixion at each end, and between

them the Flagellation, the Bearing of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Entombment, and the Resurrection.

From S. Martino we pass through the narrow streets to S. Lucia, a curious and beautiful sanctuary, where over an altar on the right is a splendid work by Benvenuto di Giovanni—an altarpiece of the Madonna enthroned with her Divine Son on her lap between S. Sebastian and S. Fabiano. Above in heaven hovers the Dove, while two angels fly there on guard about her head, two play on strangely lovely instruments at her feet. In the *predella* are three scenes divided by four panels of Saints—the Martyrdom of S. Sebastian, the Resurrection, and the Martyrdom of S. Fabian. In a recess in the eastern wall of the south transept is a fresco of the Madonna and Child between S. Roch and another Saint, with S. Bernardino and S. John Baptist at the sides. This, too, according to Mr. Berenson, is by Benvenuto.

From S. Lucia we pass to S. Croce, where on the right wall is a late picture by Luca Signorelli of the Sposalizio, an interesting and charming work of the great Umbro-Tuscan master.

We come upon Benvenuto's work again not only in the Madonna delle Nevi, where over the high altar there is an archaic Madonna from his hand, but also in the delicious little Franciscan sanctuary of S. Bernardino, some way up the valley to the west of Sinalunga.

You leave the great piazza by a road on the right, and following it uphill come at last, at the end of a little avenue of cypresses, at a turning of the way to the little church and convent, with its cool loggia and sweet country aspect.

Here in the dear summer quiet you may find—it maybe at evening, when Vespers are over and the antiphons of the *Magnificat* have reminded you that the morrow is the Feast of the Assumption, and the *Salve Regina*, that marvellously lovely anthem of which one can never grow weary, has died away in the cloisters—three pictures of exceptional beauty. The loveliest is in the choir, the Annunciation by Benvenuto di Giovanni. Under a loggia of marble beside the wonderful temple of Jerusalem, a poet's dream of a sanctuary, Madonna

rests at evening, drooping like a flower over her Little Office, her vase of lilies beside her, when suddenly like a star from heaven Gabriel falls before her on his knees, crowned with a garland from Paradise, a sceptre of olive in his hand, and whispers his *Ave.* And it is in truth from the very heaven of heavens he has come, as indeed Benvenuto has not forgotten to tell us, from the presence of the Father, Whom we may see bending down towards His angel, giving him that branch of olive and the Message, too, which announced our joy and that peace, also, which is surely ours if anywhere in the world, then here with these little friars this summer evening under the cypresses among the corn and the flowers.

There are other works, too, in the church, but they cannot keep us long from Benvenuto. Here in the choir is a picture of the Salvator Mundi by Sano di Pietro. Over an altar hard by is a fine picture of the Madonna and Child enthroned between two Saints, while in heaven God the Father rejoices with His angels and the Dove hovers over the head of our Mother about to be crowned with no mortal diadem.

It is always with a sad heart I leave S. Bernardino of Sinalunga, for who knows if I shall ever see it again? But at nightfall one must hasten away, for it is necessary to be in Foiano or Torrita before dark, since at Sinalunga there is now no inn.

Of the way to Foiano I cannot speak as I would. I can only say that it is so fair that if you may you should go afoot. You descend by the winding road through the olive gardens to the Borgata di S. Pietro by the station, and crossing the line take the road east across the valley, and climbing the hills by La Castellina descend again into the valley of the Esse, a mere long estuary of the Val di Chiana, and so climbing again come at last to Foiano towering over the main Chiana valley looking straight to Cortona.

Foiano stands indeed on the highest of those hills which form the eastern bastions of that lofty promontory thrust out by the Chiana range into the valley of the Chiana. It is a double town, the older and loftier part forming the *castello*, the

lower the *borgo*. Surrounded once by two lines of walls, both of which had three gates, the older included only the *castello* with its lofty tower and two fine palaces.

In such a place, when the majesty and beauty of the landscape has had its way with you, history, you might think, was bound to have been glorious. But in fact we are ignorant of the origin of Foiano, though some have conjectured that it got its name from the Romans, who called it Fanum or Forum Jani. However that may be, the *castello* and the *pieve* are spoken of in the earliest part of the eleventh century as dependent on the Bishop of Arezzo, though the Conti della Scialenga and Berardenga certainly had some jurisdiction here, as in so many other places about Asciano. To our surprise, in the thirteenth century we hear almost nothing of Foiano, but in the fourteenth we find it one of the most important *castelli* in the immediate power of Arezzo, until in 1337 it came into the hands of Florence, only to pass, if but for a moment, into the dominion of Perugia. By 1353 it was once more in the hands of Arezzo, but thirty years later it voluntarily submitted to Florence on the eve of the final overthrow of its ancient mistress. After that, till the whole of this part of Tuscany fell into the hands of Cosimo I in 1553, its chief business was carefully to watch Lucignano, the two strongholds, as it were, standing sentinel there for the rival cities of Florence and Siena.

Fine though Foiano is and girdled with olives and golden with corn and joyful with fruitful vineyard, it is rather by reason of its wonderful views, for the ever delectable landscape that lies at its feet, that one would come to it, but that in the Collegiata is hidden away a signed and dated picture by Luca Signorelli of the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin. This grand and noble picture was painted in 1523, the year of Signorelli's death, and was, in fact, the last he set his hand to. The Madonna, in a splendid robe of rose with a mantle of blue, fairer than the angels who attend her, kneels before our Lord Christ, who crowns her *Regina virginum*. On either side two angels play for joy, while S. Joseph, her

guardian, still stands beside her, and S. Gabriel, who was her messenger, waits lest she should speak again and he not hear. Before her in the foreground kneels S. Martino, whose altarpiece this is, dressed in a golden cope, and that he won in exchange for the poor coat he gave the beggar for Christ's sake. On his left hand stands S. Jerome and three monks, and behind him S. Mary Magdalen; and again on the other side some fine old saint introduces the donor, Angelo Massarelli.

Signorelli was an old man when he conceived this majestic work, which has the unction of a canticle almost, and we may be sure that he received some assistance, for not only were the figures of S. Gabriel and S. Mary Magdalen too feeble to have come from his wise hand, even though it trembled then, but in the *predella* only two of the four scenes are his. The four scenes represent the Life of S. Martin, and in the two Signorelli has given us with all his boldness and mastery of composition we see S. Martin in armour on his great white war-horse with his men-at-arms about him dividing his cloak with the beggar. In the other we see the Saint kneeling before a Bishop with his two acolytes—a beautiful picture.

Having seen this splendour after Mass, I do not see why the traveller should not make his way southward and west back across the valley to Torrita, which may be reached directly from Foiano by road through Bettolle. It is a walk or drive of some ten or, maybe, twelve miles. The way by Sinalunga, and so by train, is shorter, and the road is better, but so you miss Bettolle and a new vista of the great valley.

Bettolle, which may be counted half-way, is a garden—a garden of chestnuts and vineyards and olives. I do not know that Bettolle is famous among Italians, if indeed it be famous at all for anything but its fairs; but for me it is one of the fairest of all villages, with a fine wine and a courteous people, and I wish it every sort of good there is to be had in this damnable age we live in, and that is the same thing as to repeat the old commandment to keep itself unspotted from the world. Some day probably, when Italy has grown out

of her blessed poverty—and if she could but see it that is her best possession—Bettolle will be lost in a forest of tall chimneys, all the valleys will be hidden in a great pall of smoke, and a vast chemical works or what not will enslave the inhabitants from far and near. May this be far from thee, Bettolle! but I fear it. Italy knows nothing of the misery of manufacture—that is not manufacture, but the domination of the machine. She is longing to learn, for in that slavery of her people lies gold. But I tell you, Bettolle and Italy, that the most wretched of your poor upon the mountains are happy in health and wealth beyond the wildest dreams of our poor ones in the unspeakable byways of our great manufacturing towns. As I wish you well I wish you poor; but alas! you art not so poor as in my father's time. Are you happier or better? I wonder—I wonder.

And so, wondering still on that fair summer's morning, I crossed the great valley, mile after mile of it, and climbed into Torrita. Now Torrita is splendid, set on the summit of its *tufa* hill, and is probably of Etruscan origin—older then than Sinalunga, older than Foiano. Its history, so far as we may know its history, is that of every other little town between Siena and Montepulciano, and the best example of that is the story of Lucignano. It only comes really on to the stage even of Sienese history twice: it took part in the war with Perugia, and it witnessed the only honourable effort Siena was ever able to make to rid herself and her *contado* of the curse of the military companies. It happened thus. In the year 1363 Siena was ruled by that worst faction of all, the *Dodici*, who, not content with their own ineptitude, strove so far to obliterate even the memory of the *Nove* that they caused the very name to be erased from the public statutes. The times were perilous, and this gang of tradesmen was completely unfitted to deal with them. Many dependent towns had already revolted, and the Companies of Adventure which harassed the *contado* had again been bought off with great sums of money, when Messer Ceccolo degli Orsini, a Roman and no Sienese, in command of the Sienese levies,

decided to save his honour in spite of the magistrates. Finding the Company of the Hat, a professional army of ruffians and pirates ready to do any man's bidding who would pay them, lurking in the *contado* hereabout, against the order of the magistrates of Siena, he forced them to fight him in the valley between Sinalunga and Torrita and beat them, as you may see any day in the great Sala of the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, for Tommé has painted the battle there, not without glory. "He was not confirmed in his office because he had been ordered not to join battle by reason of the peril which might come of it; and for this he was not re-elected." The *Dodici*, adding infamy to cowardice, however, were not ashamed to get what glory they could out of his victory, and that fresco of Tommé's is as much a monument to their dishonour as to his victory.

Torrita to-day shares with Sinalunga not only a glory of landscape, but a wealth of pictures little, if any, inferior to hers.

In the Propositura, over the second altar on the south, is a picture of the Nativity with Saints by Bartolo di Fredi, while on the next altar is a magnificent signed altarpiece of the Madonna and Child with Saints by Benvenuto di Giovanni, painted in 1497. That is perhaps the finest work in Torrita, but in the Madonna delle Nevi we come upon some magnificent frescoes about an altar by Girolamo di Benvenuto that in their exquisite country beauty are not less delightful. In the midst we see Madonna at Assumption among a crowd of musical angels, while S. Thomas, doubtful again, receives at once for his assurance and in token of her forgiveness her girdle, which now lies, they say, in Prato, where, in fact, I have seen it. Under the arch with His Saints our Lord from amid the Cherubim awaits His Mother and ours. On either side we see two saints, and above the Annunciation, in a quiet court looking on a garden plot.

Nor is this all, for hard by Cozzarelli has painted it all over again, though with less sweetness and sincerity.

Before I left Torrita I wandered by chance into S. Flora, and

there I found what for me, after all, was the best of all, an old and beautiful triptych by some early Florentine master, where on a gold ground was set forth the Crucifixion of our Lord, with the Blessed Virgin and S. John, and weeping at the foot of the Cross golden-haired Magdalen. In the side panels stood two Saints as though at Mass, as indeed they were.

It was with this in my heart that just before sunset I set out for the railway to reach Montepulciano that night, though indeed I scarce knew how.[1]

[1] See note 10, p. 331 *infra*.

XIX

MONTEPULCIANO

THE way from the station over some seven miles of hill and dale to the lofty city of Montepulciano is one of the most splendid, the most beautiful in all Tuscany. The whole valley of the Chiana and beyond and beyond is spread out like some gracious fairyland, in which lie three magic lakes, and one of them is the loveliest in the world—the lakes of Chiusi, of Montepulciano, and of Trasimeno; beyond lie the great everlasting mountains of Umbria, and over all is a supreme and luminous peace. Little by little as you climb to the wonderful city of the beautiful name some great or delicate feature in the landscape impresses itself upon you, only to be replaced again and again by other details as fair as itself; the serene and graceful outline of Cetona, for instance, gives place to the tremendous and beautiful mass of Mont' Amiata far away, or the eagle's nest of Monte Follonica, truly a city out of a fairy tale, draws your eyes from Chiusi, till at last all your heart is set on Montepulciano itself, which suddenly appears over the lower hills at a turning of the way, the rosy queen of all this fair country, a city of another world, a city of the pure and aloof mountains.

It would be hard, and I think unprofitable, to go into the almost inextricable details of the history of this far hill city, which guarded of old so many ways and stood on so many confines. Called, as it is said, first Mons Politicus, then Mons Politianus, and finally Montepulciano, if we may believe tradition it is among the most noble of Italian towns, founded by Lars Porsena of Clusium, and already of account when

Taddeo di Bartolo — *Duomo Montepulciano*

ALTAR-PIECE OF THE ASSUMPTION

there were kings in Rome. History, however, knows nothing of Montepulciano till the year 715 of our era, and though traces of Etruscan civilization have been found on its hill-side, we know nothing of its life, if life there was, previous to the eighth century. Then it began to order itself as a free Commune, and its fate, like its story, is that of every other town in this region; in its comparative weakness it had to decide, not whether it would be free or enslaved, but which of two cities it would serve, Siena or Florence. Till 1202 it remained under the protection of Siena, but in that year it capitulated to Florence. This was but the first, if, indeed, it was the first, of innumerable surrenders, first to one party and then to another. For Montepulciano, commanding the Val di Chiana at its narrowest part, before it divided into the two arms which lead to Arezzo and Siena, dominating the only pass between the Val di Chiana and the Val d' Asso, where the Via Francigena entered the great defile between Mont' Amiata and Monte Cetona, standing, as it did, on the verge of Umbria and Tuscany, was continually the cause of war between Florence and Siena, both of which claimed so valuable a fortress. Indeed, as you read the story of those mediæval Communes you might think that their sole cause of quarrel was this little hill city, so unfortunately placed for herself in command of the great trade routes of Italy. Her fate was decided by her geographical position; for though she was so finely situated as a fortress, she was, even more than Siena, debarred by that position from ever becoming a rich and populous city of merchandise; and if these conditions be well grasped any detailed account of her story will be superfluous. For we might prophesy from them the very fate which overtook her. They destined her to be a bone of contention for ever, and even as two dogs quarrel over a bone, so Florence and Siena quarrelled over Montepulciano. Sometimes the one seemed to be going to possess her, sometimes the other, but till almost the end, in 1553, Montepulciano remained a continual cause of quarrel.

The reader will have some idea of the unfortunate story of

Montepulciano, thus at the mercy of her vastly stronger neighbours, when he has realized what the following facts really mean. Till 1202 Montepulciano lived in friendship with Siena. In that year Florence forced her to acknowledge her suzerainty. Then, in 1207, Siena forced her to acknowledge Sienese rights over the *castello*, but Florence opposed the claim, and encouraged Montepulciano to ally herself with Orvieto. The struggle that followed was a long one, and only finished in 1232 with the triumph of the Sienese and the destruction of the wall of the hill city. Two years later, however, she was compelled to rebuild the walls and once more to cede herself. There followed Montaperto (1260), after which the Ghibellines of Siena built the great fortress in Montepulciano whose ruins we still see, but the death of Manfred soon put an end to the Sienese power.

To the agony forced upon Montepulciano from outside was added in the fourteenth century internal troubles. The family of Pecora, a family of ambitious merchants, seized the place, and when they were betrayed by one of their own blood and the city freed from their tyranny in 1352, it was only to fall into the hands of Florence or of Siena or even of Perugia. Perugia, however, had serious need of the city, and did something, at any rate, to restore her her freedom, till in 1359 Niccolò del Pecora returned, and there followed riot, murder, and finally treason. Montepulciano herself asked for the protection of Siena. By 1388, however, we are not surprised to find she was tired of Siena, and appealed to Florence, whereupon Siena, as we know, placed herself and her *contado* under the lordship of Visconti of Milan. Visconti took Montepulciano, but by 1404 Siena, weary of his tyranny, got rid of him, and, making alliance with Florence, exchanged Lucignano, which then belonged to the Lily, for Montepulciano. There followed the futile wars of the *condottieri*, which fill the fifteenth century with confusion. And, in fact, it was not till Niccolò Machiavelli appeared, and, making treaty with Siena, secured the lordship of that city to Petrucci and the lordship of Montepulciano to Florence, that order rose out of chaos.

But by then Cosimo I was at hand, and the Granducato something more than a prophecy. Thus peace came at last when the hegemony of Tuscany passed into the hands of Florence under the great Medici.

There are but few signs left to-day of those centuries of struggle, of blood, treason, slavery, and destruction. Montepulciano is one of the most smiling, one of the most delightful of the smaller cities of Tuscany, and she sits there on her hill-top to-day above her lawns and vineyards and woods like a queen sure of her court and her own beauty. And, indeed, the traveller can hope to find few places more satisfying. Till last year, at any rate, he might live there as comfortably as he could wish in what was still a mediæval city. The horrid desire for what the ignorant are pleased to call "progress," which with them means destruction, the beauty of Montepulciano and a part of her dignity and aloofness have been compromised. The old winding way from the railway, so charming and delightful, and as convenient as any could wish, is no longer good enough for the Socialist element that everywhere in Italy is able to bring so accursed a pressure upon the powers that be. A new and perfectly straight road is under construction, a part of the old wall of the city has been destroyed, and it looks as though Montepulciano, like Perugia, were to be cursed by the advent of a Belgian electric tramway from the station. What charming ideas the modern Italian has!—the modern Italian, I mean, who has so unfortunately obtained control of his unfortunate country. Having turned nearly all the cities of Italy into a kind of pandemonium, where no way is safe or quiet, he is now busy infesting the country byways with the same infernal machines. No one questions the right of the Italians to do what they will with their own land, but seeing that Italy as a whole is largely dependent for prosperity on the foreign visitor and tourist—a fact every Italian finds it convenient to forget—one may question the wisdom of uglifying or destroying everything the foreign visitor and tourist come to see.

As yet, however, Montepulciano is by no means spoiled.

It is true that the Marzocco Inn is not so charming as I feel sure it must have been when Symonds made it famous. A certain greediness which the unfortunate tourist excites, alas! spoils good manners, even the natural good manners of the Tuscans. Still the comfort of the inn, even the cleanliness of your waiter, are—so it be well with the beds—in my opinion secondary matters. It is always possible to eat in the fields, and no one travels to sit in an inn parlour, but if all we have come to see has been "improved" away by the great vulgar legions of "progress," it is a serious matter. Happily in Montepulciano there is still enough and to spare.

For if the wine be over-rated, and I sincerely think it is—I know fifty better wines to-day in Northern and Southern Tuscany—it is impossible to praise too highly the beauty of the city and of the country in which she reigns, or to tell easily of the beauty of the works of art which still abide there—too many, alas! in a museum.

On entering Montepulciano one is struck at once by the splendour of her walls and gates, by the Porta del Prato especially, and once within the city, even as one comes to the inn, the palaces of Antonio da Sangallo astonish one by their beauty and splendour. From the Marzocco—that sign of Florentine domination opposite the Palazzo Avignonesi, just outside the inn, all one's way through the city is set with fine buildings—the Loggia del Mercato of Vignola, the Palazzo Tarugi, the Palazzo del Pecora, the Palazzo Contucci, perhaps the finest of Sangallo's buildings within the city, the magnificent Palazzo Pubblico, truly as fine as that of Florence, but with a tower that follows a long way off the Mangia of Siena, the whole of the Piazza Grande with its beautiful fountain, the Palazzo Cervini of Sangallo, the Palazzo Bombagli, so charmingly Sienese, the Palazzo Ricci-Paracciani—all the way is set with fine buildings up to the modern *fortezza*, which stands on the ruins of the old Rocca of the Sienese.

All this without speaking of the churches. But they are as lovely as one can wish, from S. Agostino to S. Maria, and the Cathedral, which is, as it should be, the best of all.

Climbing the narrow, winding street from the Marzocco, you pass almost at once on your right the Church of S. Agostino, with its fine Renaissance façade, a delightful work of Michelozzo, and there, over the principal doorway, is the first of those art treasures in which Montepulciano is so rich, Michelozzo's three fine clay figures in half-length of the Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and S. Augustine. You will find many older things in Montepulciano, but nothing, I think, that will charm and delight you more than these fifteenth-century sculptures by a master not certainly the equal of Donatello, but a master, nevertheless, we may well envy the fifteenth century.

Passing on, ever upwards, through the town, we come at last to the Church of S. Maria, standing in an open space on the hill-side, and commanding a wide and lovely view of that wonderful world of valley and mountain in which Montepulciano stands. The beautiful tower and charming doorway and façade of S. Maria take you at once, and prepare you perhaps for the wonder that awaits you within. There, over the first altar on the left, is a splendid panel of the Madonna and Child by Segna, that early master, altogether an exquisite work, in which colour and form are at one in glory, the blue of the mantle rivalling the sky in depth and sweetness.

Over the second altar, on the right, is a remnant of a Trecento fresco of the Madonna and Child, evidently a very holy thing, for it has been repeated in a modern picture over the first there beside it. In the apse is a copy of the famous Madonna of Correggio at Parma. And here, too, is a fine altarpiece by Andrea della Robbia, with a fine miracle picture in the midst.

Just beyond S. Maria we come out on the hill-side over the olives, and thence we may see the way we shall go to Pienza, Montalcino, and Mont' Amiata, with Rocca d' Orcia and Campiglia d' Orcia on its skirts, and there lies Trequanda and nearer Monte Follonica, with, on a fair day, in the farthest distance to the north and west, the dim blue mountains of Elba over the midland sea.

Turning away at last from such a vision of the kingdoms of the world and their beauty, we make our way up past the *fortezza* to the Duomo, which, lovely in itself as it is, is the real treasure-house of Montepulciano.

A gaunt brick building, only partly cased with stone, flanked by a great square tower, it is the colour, perhaps, rather than the simple form of the Cathedral that wins you at first, but within you have a noble church of a fine Renaissance type, spacious and full of light, though it may not claim your love as the churches of your home. Nevertheless this somewhat worldly sanctuary possesses two treasures of great price, the one whole as ever it was, the other broken, yet even in ruin one of the finest things in the city—I mean the great altarpiece of Taddeo di Bartolo and the broken tomb of Aragazzi by Michelozzo.

Bartolommeo Aragazzi was secretary to Martin V, and Michelozzo's tomb, when it was still perfect, must have been one of the finest works of that master. Two fragments of it are now to be found just within the west doors of the Cathedral, but the main portion, the tomb itself, still stands over the high altar. There Aragazzi lies in friar's frock, his beautiful hands crossed carefully, seemingly sleeping, his wise and careworn face truly sympathetic, in the great peace that has smoothed away the restlessness that in that troublous time must often have tortured it. Beside him, one on either side the high altar, are two statues—S. Gabriel and S. Mary at Annunciation. The dead man lies sleeping between them, hearing in his dream the marvellous salutation.

Scattered all over the church are fragments of the once perfect cenotaph, friezes of cherubs, and reliefs. No city, I think, in all Southern Tuscany can boast of so much Florentine work as Montepulciano; but she is under no obligation, since she gave to the city of the Lily the greatest ornament of Lorenzo's court, Angelo Poliziano, who was born here, and called by her name. The greatest treasure of the church, however, is no longer this broken work of a Florentine, but a true masterpiece of Siena, Taddeo Bartoli's vast altar-

piece that towers over the high altar. It is a triptych, towered and pinnacled, with a splendid double *predella*, perfect in every detail, of the Death and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. In the midst we see the Madonna ravished into heaven, surrounded by angels, while below on earth the apostles weep for her, since she is gone from them. There are here some hundreds of figures, and the character of the heads, the wonderfully living and lovely angels, the perfect completeness of the whole work, give to it a beauty, a nobility, and an importance beyond anything else we have from Taddeo's hand. One head among all those which bend over the frail body of the Virgin is especially vivid and full of life: it is, as the raised gold letters of the halo tell us, that of S. Thaddæus, and there, I think, we see a portrait of the painter.

In the four pillars are twelve figures of saints, and in the two side panels again other saints, each with his name or hers written in the gold of their haloes. Above, in the midst, we see the Coronation of the Virgin, and on either side the mystery of the Annunciation. The *predelle* consist of twenty-three scenes, nine of which are concerned with the life of Christ, while fourteen are devoted to the saints.

The Duomo possesses other works of considerable interest; for instance, in the third chapel on the south side of the church is a panel of S. Vincent Ferrer by some pupil of Bonfigli and a figure of our Lord by some later master. The font, too, is a work of much beauty.

One other church at least, within the city, that of S. Lucia, is worth a visit. Here, in the chapel on the right, is a Madonna and Child, a later work by Luca Signorelli.

But most of the pictures which used to adorn the churches of Montepulciano have unhappily been gathered into the Pinacoteca, where, it is true, they are well cared for, but where much of their beauty and all their meaning are lost.

In the first room seven pieces, reliefs in enamelled terra-cotta by the Robbia school, have been gathered; among them a lunette of the Madonna and Child with S. John

Baptist and S. Lucy; an altarpiece with a tabernacle about which stand four Saints and over which hover two Angels, while above, in a lunette, Madonna is at Annunciation, and below, in the *predella*, two angels wait; another altarpiece of the Madonna and Child between two Saints while above two Angels crown her as Queen. Here, too, is an exquisite relief in marble of the Madonna and Child between four angels by some unknown master of the fifteenth century.

It is, however, in the pictures that the traveller will chiefly find delight. These fill Room II. Here is a Coronation of the Blessed Virgin, with seven angels above and four below (1), by Bartolo di Fredi (?), but the heads of the Virgin and Christ are spoiled. The next picture (2) is, though a late work, perhaps the most interesting in the city by reason of its subject. It is an Immaculate Conception by Lappolli of Arezzo, and was painted in 1547. In a garden Madonna treads the devil, half Cupid, half serpent, under her feet, bruising his head with her heel. God the Father blesses her, rod in hand. Beneath and around are S. Rosa of Viterbo, S. Francis, and S. Nicholas of Bari. The picture bears the following inscription: "Ioannes Ant. Lappolus Aret. Exprimebat Quod Alius ex Voto et Animo Concepisset Anno MDXLVII."

We then come to a Madonna and Child with S. John the Baptist (3), a charming work with a lovely landscape, by some pupil of Filippino Lippi. A Holy Family (7) of much beauty follows, by Sodoma, and then we find ourselves face to face with the masterpiece of the collection, a delicate and lovely Nativity (10) by Benvenuto Giovanni or Girolamo di Benvenuto, where our Lord lies on the ground just outside the shed where the ox feeds with the ass, and Madonna, like a tower of rosy ivory, kneels with S. Joseph to worship Him, while a shepherd in the background peers down in wonder and the Holy Dove hovers over "the place where the young child lay." In a cleft of dark rock an owl rests, and in heaven God blesses the world in a cloud of Cherubim, and a tiny bright angel, like a gorgeous bird, flies earthward with

LA MADONNA DI S. BIAGIO, MONTE PULCIANO

those glad tidings to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks, which shall be to all people. Nothing more delicately fair than this Nativity is to be found in Montepulciano.

A few other works in the collection have some interest for us: a spoiled Crucifixion (12) by some pupil of Filippino Lippi; a reliquary (16), the Madonna and Child above, and under S. John Baptist, S. Biagio, and S. Sigismundo by some pupil of Fei; a Madonna and Child with S. Francis and a Bishop by some pupil of Bicci di Lorenzo; a *tondo* of the Madonna and Child in a fair landscape (20) by Carli, and a charming picture by Bicci di Lorenzo of the Madonna and Child with S. Francis, S. Catherine, S. John the Baptist, and an Olivetan monk.

But it is only as we are leaving Montepulciano for Pienza perhaps that we see what is surely the most striking monument to her splendour at its greatest in the later Renaissance—I mean the beautiful church built for love by Antonio da Sangallo beneath the western height of the town. Coming upon S. Maria della Consolazione, outside one of the most unapproachable cities in all Italy, Todi in Umbria, I called it, in an eager burst of enthusiasm, the most beautiful church in all the world. Well, here you may see something very like it without going to the trouble of marching to Todi. S. Biagio of Montepulciano is, on a small scale, of course, what S. Pietro in Vaticano should have been, what it would have been but for the barbarian Reformation—a Greek cross under a dome. As you stand on the threshold it is upward that your gaze is drawn, irresistibly, by the great light and space of the design, the height and beauty of all the proportions. Here is a church full of light—a church not for repentance but for praise; the whole place seems to utter the great verses of the *Te Deum Laudamus*, in itself to give visible form to words in which alone we hear some faint echo of those the great archangels sing:—

> "Tibi omnes Angeli, Tibi coeli et universae potestates:
> Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim incessabili voce proclamant:
> Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth,
> Pleni sunt coeli et terra majestatis gloriae tuae."

Is it not, as we pass on our way, for the words of this ineffable song that the olives lend their music, that the vineyards are hushed and all the flowers bow their heads?

"Tu Rex gloriae, Christe,
Tu Patris semipiternus es Filius.
Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horruisti Virginis uterum.
Tu devicto mortis aculeo, aperuisti credentibus regna coelorum.
Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes in gloria Patris."

XX

PIENZA AND S. QUIRICO D' ORCIA

THE road from Montepulciano to Pienza, a distance of some eight miles, is one of the most picturesque, one of the most wonderful in Central Italy. View after view, vista after vista, north and south, east and west, open before you, the glory of the world seems indeed to be spread out there for your joy. To the south rise the indescribably impressive forms of Mont' Amiata, Monte Cetona, and the huge bizarre rock Radicofani, to the north lie the low and tawny hills of the desert, closed at last by the distant range beneath which Siena lies, to the west Pienza stands like a sentinel, and after Siena Montalcino, and behind Montalcino the blue mysterious mountains of the Maremma, while behind you to the east Montepulciano rises like some marvellous sign high up into the sky. One may well sing *Te Deum*. Nowhere else in Tuscany does the strength and nobility of the Italian landscape so impress itself upon you, nowhere else do the mountains seem so everlasting and so proud or the valleys so rare, the world so wonderful a prize. Nor is the character of this landscape less splendid than its composition. It has before everything a beauty and strength of outline, of construction, that I have found equalled only in Spain: it has colour, too, and spaciousness, but chiefly it has outline and beauty, decisive and affirmative, in which I find much of the beauty of plain-chant. It has not the quietness, the repose, the softness and sweetness that we find everywhere in Southern England; just these qualities it is content to lack, but it has always what

is rarest in England, a beauty of outline without which there is no real or profound satisfaction, I think, no finality; just as in music nothing contents us at last as the plain-song does, in whose extraordinary simplicity and assurance everything that the heart of man can conceive seems to be hidden and expressed. So I thought as one summer afternoon I rested in the shadow of a cypress on that glorious road, so far from the noisy cities, so far from that island in the northern sea which I have loved because it is my home. And suddenly, as I thought of all this, looking the while at the mountains and the fairy city of Monte Follonica over the barren valley, I became aware that I was sitting beside a short granite pillar, like a milestone, on which was carved an English name—Newton. Was this some belated monument, worn to a stump by the weather, battered, maybe, by angry and incredulous *clericali*, to the great philosopher, one of the supreme expressions of my country, or merely a sign set up by some restless adventurer of my race who, like my forefathers, had set out where the road led oversea, and liking by chance some vague countryside, had acquired land there and set to farming?

A little later I came to a great castle at a turning of the way over the bare hills, and then at last and suddenly Pienza came into full view, still some miles away, so I set out with renewed heart and won the gate at sunset.

And as it happened my angel went with me, for as I came up the one long street of the place into the piazza where the Duomo stands and the Palazzo del Municipio and the Palazzo Piccolomini, and indeed all the great buildings of Pienza, he led me, and I swear I knew nothing about it, out behind the great church on to a narrow terrace, and there I watched the sunset. I could not have had greater good fortune. For it was not only the sunset I saw, but the sunset over a great bare world of mountain and valley—Mont' Amiata, now quite close, and Val d' Orcia—a world actually as beautiful and as strong as Castile, as barren, too, and as stony, as tremendous in its marvellous significance. Desolate beyond expression, that wide and desert valley, full of twilight, lay before me,

and out of it rose the vast bastions of Mont' Amiata, the greatest mountain in Tuscany, and its foundations were as the foundations of a nation. Huge and sloping cliffs of tawny rock supported the enormous weight of the mountain, rising higher and higher till they formed at last the tremendous platform from which rose the cone of this great extinct volcano we call Mont' Amiata. Not a tree was to be seen, not a house, not a sign of human habitation or toil, only this primeval world of boulder and cliff and desert, out of which the great mountain rose—the monument of some bygone and departed age of stone. When the sun had set and the last faint ghost of light had vanished from the earth still under a heaven of stars, the mountain loomed out before me, blotting out the whole western sky. And as I returned down the street of Pienza to the inn it was that beautiful grave shape which I saw still before me, that I could not put out of my mind or forget, that later haunted my dreams, for I seemed to have seen some supernatural beauty, vast and beyond the measure of man, that in its tremendous force and silence expressed something I was not able to understand. Something it held in common with the constellations, those blazons of the sky which surely portend some message or express the meaning of some godlike order, some universal ceremony in which the Sun is served at a heavenly altar by all the planets in order, and the stars in their courses chaunt the winding antiphons in some universal Liturgy.

The story of Pienza is like the fairy tale of Cinderella, which after all has Christian authority, for is it not written that the last shall be first? Before Pienza changed her name, before her wonderful, her incredible good fortune befell her, she was but a little good-for-nothing village of a few hundred inhabitants, and her name was Corsignano. Then in the first years of the fifteenth century a certain poor nobleman, exiled from Siena, came to this village to live by cultivating the few wretched acres which alone remained to him, for he was ruined. With him came his young wife, as noble as

himself, and presently in their little homestead she gave birth to a son, whom they called Enea Silvio. This child of the race of the Piccolomini, after a life of adventure, managing his affairs with great astuteness, and meeting with much good fortune, was presently elected Pope, and taking, in memory of Aeneas, after whom he was named, the title of Pius, out of his vanity, in the twinkling of an eye, as only a Pope can, he turned the disreputable and dirty little village of Corsignano into the city of Pienza, building there a cathedral and certain palaces, and setting over it to govern it a Bishop, that his name might be remembered for ever and his birth-place be held in honour *in saecula saeculorum.* Now the infallibility of a Pope no one of good education will be found to question; but this infallibility, as is well known, is only to be found in matters pertaining to the Faith, and in them only when he speaks *ex cathedra* as St. Peter's successor or as the vicegerent of God here on earth—PP. Pont. Max. Serv. Servorm. Dei. Therefore it is not surprising that, do what he would, though Decree followed Decree and Bull followed Bull, Pienza remained Corsignano—that is to say, a little village—and nothing that the Pope and the Bishop could do with their cathedral and their palaces ever was able to make it otherwise. So God ordained; and as it was in the beginning, so it is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. If you do not believe me, go and see for yourself. You will find it as I have said. And maybe you will allow that I am right, without further demonstration, when I say that it is only lately Pienza has come into the possession of an inn. According to Augustus Hare there was no inn in Pienza in his day.

Having settled this matter, let me hasten to add that as a village Pienza is one of the most charming and delightful places in the world, exceptional, too, as villages go, in the possession of a fine cathedral and several palaces, to say nothing of pictures and a museum; and yet with all these, which Pius gave her, the finest thing and incomparably the loveliest and the best which she possesses was the gift of

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God—I mean the great view she has of the mountains and the Val d' Orcia from her hill-side. For this she should give thanks daily, and we with her; for the rest, we can accept it with a certain complacence, seeing that it is there, not for our sakes at all, but to satisfy the vanity of Enea Silvio, the most human of the Popes who, in the name of Pius II, filled St. Peter's Chair not unworthily from 1458 to 1464.

The most considerable buildings in Pienza, the buildings which it owes to Pius II, are set about the Piazza del Duomo, in which the Palazzo Pubblico faces the Cathedral, and the Arcivescovado the Piccolomini Palace: these are the sights of Pienza, but I always prefer first to visit the old *pieve*, the little parish church of Corsignano, which was here or ever Pius came and thrust upon the village an honour too intolerable—the honour of his name.

To reach this humble little sanctuary it is necessary to descend behind the apse of the Duomo for a few hundred yards southward, when it will be seen beside the way, a somewhat neglected flower of poverty and littleness. The church is dedicated to S. Vito and S. Modesta, and is very ancient, the Bishops of Arezzo and Siena having disputed its jurisdiction even in the eighth century. The present building, however, dates from the eleventh or twelfth century, and consists of three naves, divided by unequal round arches of stone. Beneath is a crypt. Two splendid romanesque doorways, ornamented with sculpture, lead into the church; that in the façade has a curious and half-ruined round tower. Here both Pius II and his father were christened.

Another relic of the village of Corsignano is the Franciscan Convent church of S. Francesco, that once had a little hospice of friars attached to it which in the eighteenth century was transformed into an episcopal seminary. Once covered with frescoes, now lost to us, the church was restored in 1892–1903. It still holds a few Sienese pictures—almost all that is left to it of its sweet country beauty. The two churches of Corsignano are, however,

but shrines for the sentimental traveller; for the rest of us there remain the Cathedral, the Piccolomini Palace, and the Museo, which after all are what has brought us to so out-of-the-way a place as Pienza.

Evil days have befallen the beautiful masterpiece of Bernardo Rossellino, which he began in 1457 and, with the Piccolomini Palace, finished in less than three years. In the series of earthquakes that have lately proved so disastrous for Italy, the whole of the foundations of the beautiful apse of the Duomo of Pienza were destroyed; a vast winding chasm opened under the choir, and it is difficult to see how that part of the building can be saved. The devoted and loyal enthusiasm of Count Silvio Piccolomini is engaged in its preservation, and it is consoling to know, therefore, that what can be done to save the church will certainly be achieved, and that nothing will be left unattempted. This young nobleman, whose ancestor founded the city of Pienza, is a type I find rare in Italy, and not common anywhere. King in his little country, he is a veritable magician, bringing order out of any chaos, and his thoughtfulness for his own people and his kindness to strangers are well known through all the country-side. To watch him with the workmen in the Duomo or with the city fathers, or among the children of his capital, is to hope for modern Italy. If Count Silvio's ways and character ever become common form among his brother nobles, be sure we shall see a new, strong, and steadfast kingdom after all in Italy, and no one, I think, will desire this more heartily than those who are least content with her as she is.

The church which Count Silvio is so earnestly trying to save is a fine Renaissance building, with a beautiful façade, with the arms of Pio II in the architrave; divided into three naves of equal height by eight travertine columns. The most charming feature is the apse, which is in such grave danger, and from outside, the tower, the most prominent feature in Pienza as seen from a distance.

Our delight in the church itself, however, is vastly increased

when we find that its ancient treasures of art—the best of them at least in the way of pictures—have been preserved to it and not hidden away in the Museo. Three masterpieces of Sienese painting greet us here each in its own chapel.

In the first chapel on the right is a splendid altarpiece by Matteo di Giovanni. The Virgin sits enthroned with her little Son on her knee in the act of blessing, while around her stand S. Bartolommeo, S. Lucia, S. Matthew, and S. Catherine, with two little angels.

In the first chapel on the left is a fine work by Sano di Pietro. The Virgin enthroned with our Lord—an apple in His left hand—is surrounded by S. James, S. Anne, S. Philip, and S. Mary Magdalen.

In the second chapel in this aisle we find a magnificent altarpiece by Vecchietta of the Assumption. In the midst Mary, borne on a silver cloud by a crowd of angels, is caught into heaven, into Christ's arms, while beneath, beside her empty tomb, S. Thomas looks upward. On either side stand two saints, on the left S. Pio—first Pope of that name—and S. Agatha, and on the other S. Calisto and S. Catherine of Siena, whom the second Pio canonized. This work is, in fact, one of the masterpieces of the Sienese school of the fifteenth century; it gives us to understand to how great a place in religious art the painters of that school had been called.

On coming out from the Duomo one has on one's right the Arcivescovado, and it is there that the Museum has found a home. This small collection, with its various treasures of tapestry, of Opus Anglicanum, of sculptures and paintings, is by no means to be ignored. It is true I would rather see the marvellous Pienza cope, made in England and presented by Tomasso Paleologus to Pio II, worn by the Bishop in the Duomo for the Matins of Christmas: it is true I should rejoice to hear Vespers sung from the wonderful choir-books splendid with miniatures on some winter afternoon as I sat under the great altarpiece of Matteo da Siena, but since that is impossible, I will take care not to deprive my eyes of their pleasure and

joy in the Museo of Pienza. As for the cope, who can praise it well or remember without regret that we made it in England when we were happy, and cannot match it now? Indeed, there is nothing so fine in England of England's own work, the only piece able to match it being the cope at Ascoli, but this is the finer of the two. The Pienza cope represents in its exquisitely embroidered figures, in the first two half-circles, the Life of the Blessed Virgin, beneath which, dividing this first from the second half-circle, are set eight of her ancestors, including David and Solomon. The twelve apostles divide the second from the third and last half-circle of figures, which represents the Life of S. Catherine of Alexandria. The foundation of this magnificent vestment is linen, but it is completely hidden by an embroidered field of gold; on this are set the figures of various-coloured silk.

The cope, though it be the most splendid, is not the only relic of Pio II we find in the Museo. There too are his Crosier and his Pyx, certain mitres, and other vestments and ornaments.

The pictures—a splendid though as yet ill-arranged collection gathered in a room far too small for them—are hung in the next room. Here is a fine Madonna and Child with S. John Baptist, S. Biagio, S. Niccola, and S. Floriano by Vecchietta. Above is a beautiful lunette of the Annunciation, while in the *predella* are three panels: the Crucifixion in the midst, and on one side the Martyrdom of S. Biagio, and on the other that most delightful story of how S. Niccola saved the three maidens—asleep here in their beds—from harlotry.

Close by is a charming work by Giovanni di Paolo of the Madonna and Child with SS. Bernardino, Jerome, Francis, and Chiara; above in the lunette is a marvellously lovely Pietà hesitating to be realistic; while in the *predella* are three *tondi* of saints, and at each end the Piccolomini arms. The colour and quality of this work are remarkable.

Bartolo di Fredi calls us next with a lovely Virgin of Mercy and two Angels: a sweet and gracious picture. Then, of all things, we find a Sassetta, a small triptych of the Madonna and

Vecchietta *Duomo Pienza*

ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN

Child with S. John and some woman saint, and in the pinnacles God the Father and angels.

A fine and even exquisite work by Matteo di Giovanni is the last notable picture in the room. This is a Madonna and Child with four Saints; above, God the Father; below, three small *tondi*, two saints and the Crucifixion. Two other works should be mentioned: one a diptych by an unknown master in which we see S. Pio and S. Andrea on a gold ground; the other a triptych, maybe by Bartolo di Fredi, with many scenes from the lives of Christ and the Blessed Virgin.

The great palace of Pienza, the Palazzo Piccolomini, fully comparable to any similar building in Florence or Siena, is well worth a visit; its court and *loggiata* are very charming, and the hexagonal well there, carved with the arms of Pio, is worthy of Rossellino. Within the palace is some magnificent old furniture and a fairly good collection of family portraits, among them the only known likeness, I think, of Pio II.

But the way calls us, and we must pursue it.

As I have said, the inn at Pienza is clean and comfortable, the people are courteous and do their best for you, and you forget the humility of their arrangements in their real kindliness. Nothing half so good awaits you at S. Quirico d' Orcia or at Buonconvento. Indeed, it is not till you have climbed to that eagle's nest, Montalcino, that you can lie again like a Christian.

It is a hard day's journey to go from Pienza *viâ* S. Quirico and Buonconvento to Montalcino, and should only be attempted with a pair of horses. He who goes afoot must be content to sleep either at S. Quirico or at Buonconvento, and I do not know that there is much to choose between them.

As for the road thither from Pienza, it winds still across the hills till you come down into S. Quirico, a little town of one long street surrounded by perfect walls, with two remarkable romanesque churches.

One of these, the *pieve*, dedicated to S. Quirico and S. Giulitta is, I suppose, unique in Tuscany, being an almost

complete specimen of a romanesque building so far as its exterior goes, with a fine bell-tower and three round-arched porticoes supported by pillars resting on lions. One of the doorways is in the south transept, another is in the south aisle, and the third is the great west doorway in the façade. All of them are nobly decorated with sculpture, and date at latest from the twelfth century.

Within the church there is a fine altarpiece by Sano di Pietro of the Madonna and Child with S. John Baptist, S. Quirico, S. Galgano, and S. John the Evangelist. Above is the Resurrection of our Lord, who releases the souls in Purgatory, while in the *predella* we see the Birth, Presentation, Marriage, Assumption, and Coronation of the Blessed Virgin.

S. Quirico d' Orcia, on the high road to Rome from the north, was of old, before the coming of the railway, a place of some importance. Travellers lunched there after leaving Buonconvento, the first stage out of Siena, proceeding thence to Radicofani to sleep. It was once known as S. Quirico in Osenna, though no one seems able to explain why, and in the days of the Hohenstaufen it was the residence of an Imperial governor. After it came definitely into the power of Siena it was strongly fortified, and these walls are still happily almost perfect. But its greatest boast to-day is perhaps the Palazzo Chigi, a Sienese palace of the seventeenth century, and the ruined sixteenth-century park or gardens called the Orti Leonini.

XXI

BUONCONVENTO, MONTALCINO, AND BADIA S. ANTIMO

IN S. Quirico we find ourselves once more on the Via Francigena, and it is along that great highway northward that we shall set out for Buonconvento. The way lies at first across the gaunt valley of the Tuomo and then over some bare hills down into the Val d' Asso, where, at Torrenieri, we cross the line of railway that joins Asciano with Grosseto.

Torrenieri is nothing but a huddle of houses. We follow the road, which climbs out of the valley of the Asso, and, crossing the watershed, descends into the valley of the Serlate, which it follows for some distance till it turns into the valley of the Ombrone, some three miles south of Buonconvento.

Buonconvento, once the capital of all this region, the first post out of Siena on the road to Rome, the camping-place of an Emperor, has fallen on evil days. Already falling into decay, for traffic now follows the railway and knows the Via Francigena no more, its ruin was completed by the earthquake of a year ago, which shook it altogether and destroyed not a little of what had stood many centuries of war. It was only during the last month of 1909 that the soldiers who had been sent to render assistance to the inhabitants in their misfortune departed, and now what is left of Buonconvento would scarcely be worth a visit but for the

pictures in the Misericordia and in the Opera di SS. Pietro and Paolo.

This small but still beautiful walled town that has just suffered so dreadful a visitation was the witness of the great tragedy that marked the end of the Middle Age, that brought Dante to his knees, and in reality finally disposed of the Imperial power in Italy—the death of Henry VII, Dante's Emperor.

That barbarian, of whose nobility we hear so much and see so little, descended into Italy in 1310, dreaming of the feudal union of Germany and Italy. Nor was he alone in his dream. Every disappointed ambition in Italy, noble and ignoble, greeted him with feverish enthusiasm. Bitter with loneliness, imprisoned in the adamant of his personality, Dante, amid the rocks of the Casentino, hurled his curses at Florence, who, with her allies, refused to receive him, or in fact, to call him anything but "Enemy" and "German King." Hailing Henry as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," Dante urged him to attack Florence, and in language at once blasphemous and runagate bade him destroy his native city. Henry, who seems to have been less intelligent than Dante had hoped, preferred to enter Rome, where he easily won the Capitol, but was fiercely opposed by King Robert of Naples, the head of the Guelf cause, when he tried to reach S. Peter's to win the Imperial crown. The Roman people, then certainly a mere rabble, took his part, however, and by threats and violence compelled the Bishops to crown him in the Lateran on 29 June, 1312.

Then the Emperor followed Dante's advice, and proceeded to lay siege to Florence. In this he was completely unsuccessful, and after six weeks, in which he never dared to make an attack, he raised the siege and set out for Poggibonsi, his health already ruined by anxiety and hardship, and his army, as was always the case both before and since, broken and spoiled by the Italian climate. He spent the winter and spring between Poggibonsi and Pisa, then, with some idea of retrieving all by invading Naples, he set off

THE GATE OF BUONCONVENTO

southward in August. On the 24th of the month, the day of S. Bartholomew, he was in Buonconvento, and there on that day he died worn out, or poisoned, as some say, in the Communion.

What that invasion which Dante hailed with so much enthusiasm meant to Italy, we may gather from an old chronicle in the Communal Library of Siena, quoted by Mr. Heywood in his "Ensamples of Fra Filippo."

"The said Emperor Henry of Luxembourg moved his camp from Pancole with all his host Thursday, the sixteenth day of August, and came burning. And he pitched his camp at Stigliano and at Orgia Thursday, the sixteenth day of August.

"The Emperor Henry of Luxembourg moved his camp from Stigliano and from Orgia Wednesday, the twenty-second day of August, and went burning and pitched his camp the said day at the Badia Ardenga and at Buonconvento.

"Also during the said Signoria, the Emperor Henry of Luxembourg died in camp at Buonconvento, Friday, the twenty-fourth day of August, the day of Saint Bartholomew."

In these few and simple words we learn all we need know of the "noble" ways of Dante's idol. When he died, either from disease or poison, on 24 August, there can have been no man in all Southern Tuscany but sang *Te Deum*. As for Dante, is there a good word for any of the cities of his fatherland anywhere in all his work?

But it was not only in the Middle Age that Buonconvento had some fame. All through the Renaissance down to our own day almost it was of international importance as being a post on the great highway to Rome. There all our fathers have slept and cursed the bed and the fare as heartily as some of us will do.

To go no farther back than the early years of the nineteenth century, we find evidence of its importance to travellers. Even the inn was called *Il Cavallo Inglese*—the English Horse—a sure sign of its foreign fame.

A traveller, one of our own countrywomen, writing in 1817,

just after the close of the Great War, has left us an account of the place and what it stood for in the journey to Rome.

". . . Night closed in upon us long before we reached our destined place of rest, the wretched *osteria* of the still more wretched village of Buonconvento. Thither, where a wearisome pilgrimage of four mortal hours had at last conducted us, its half-starved-looking denizens would not admit us into the humble pig-sty in which they wallowed themselves, but conducted us to a lone, uninhabited house on the other side of the way, in which there was not a human being. We were ushered up an old ghastly staircase, along which the wind whistled mournfully, into an open hall, the raftered roof of which was overhung with cobwebs and the stone floor was deep in filth. Four doors entered into this forlorn-looking place, two of which led to the chill, dirty, miserable holes which were our destined places of repose, and the other two to rooms that the people said did not belong to them ; neither did they give any very distinct or satisfactory account of who might be their tenants—one old woman assuring us they were inhabited by '*nessuno*,' while the other maintained they were occupied by '*galant' uomini*.'

"It was miserably cold; the wind blew about us, and we could get no fire. But there was no remedy for these grievances, and we resigned ourselves to fate and to bed. The two hideous old beldames who had brought us our wretched supper had left us for the night, and no human being was near us, when we heard the sound of a heavy foot on the creaking staircase, and a man wrapped in a cloak and armed with a sword and a musket stalked into the hall.

"He informed us that he had the honour of lodging in the house, that he was the only person who had that honour, and that he should have the honour of sleeping in the next room to ours.

"Finding him so courteous, and being aware there was no means of getting quit of him, we treated him on our part with the utmost civility, perhaps upon the principle that the

Indians worship the devil; and, exchanging the salutation of '*Felicissima notte*,' our whiskered neighbour retreated into his apartment, the key of which he had in his pocket. We contented ourselves with barricading our doors with the only table and chair that our desolate chamber contained; then in uncurtained and uncoverleted wretchedness, upon flock beds, the prey of innumerable fleas, and shaking with cold, if not with fear, we lay the livelong night; not even having wherewithal to cover us, for the potent smell of the filthy rag which performed the double duties of blanket and quilt obliged us to discard it, and our carriage cloaks were but an inadequate defence against the blasts that whistled through the manifold chinks of the room."

Buonconvento to-day, in spite of the earthquake, is by no means so poor or so rough a place as it seems to have been a hundred years ago, and for its poverty there are many consolations in the way of pictures.

In the Church of the Misericordia there is a fine picture of the Assumption of the Virgin by Pietro di Domenico and a *predella* of the Life of the Blessed Virgin. But it is the Opera di SS. Pietro and Paolo, the ancient *pieve* in the Borgo di Mezzo, where the Palazzo Pubblico and the Palazzo Taj stand, that the best pictures are to be found. Here are works by Taddeo di Bartolo, by Matteo di Giovanni, by Girolamo di Benvenuto, by Sano di Pietro, and by Pacchiarotto. The Taddeo di Bartolo is a panel of S. Anthony Abbot and the Magdalen. The Matteo di Giovanni stands over the high altar, and is a panel of the Madonna and Child. The Girolamo di Benvenuto is on the left side of the church; it represents the Annunciation with S. Francis and S. Anthony Abbot. By Sano di Pietro are two works—a triptych of the Madonna with S. Catherine and S. Bernardino and a panel of the Annunciation. As for Pacchiarotto, his picture is in the sacristy, and represents the Madonna and Child with S. John Baptist, S. Peter, S. Paul, and S. Sebastian. It is an early work.

There is not much else in Buonconvento nowadays to cause

us to linger there. You, as I did, will soon set off westward and south on the long climb by Bibbiano and the passage of the Ombrone up to Montalcino, the eagle's nest that the doves have occupied: and all the way is a song.

No better fate, no more happy destiny can await any traveller in Tuscany than that which leads him on a summer morning into Montalcino—one of the most lovely, one of the most pleasant, and one of the dearest places in a land where there is always something to be thankful for. Yet, even in that "cara e beata e benedetta Toscana patria d' ogni eleganza e d' ogni gentil costume, e sede eterna di civiltà," as Leopardi rightly called it, there is but one Montalcino. Its perfections are so many and, gathered all together into an eerie for eagles, they must truly be unique. First, the place is full of girls, and nearly all of them are pretty. Then the people are of a sweetness and courtesy that are rare even in Italy; then the churches are charming and are full of pictures; then the country round about is delicious; and last, the inn is a paradise of comfort, welcome, and good living—indeed, till you have been to the inn at Montalcino you are utterly ignorant of what a country inn in Tuscany can be.

Of the beauty of the women I shall say little, and, indeed, nothing; for in Montalcino they have still some rags of virtue, and I know too well that any excuse is good enough for the companies that build electric tramways. Of the courtesy of the people I would say much, but can say no more than that it reminded me that Montalcino is and always was Sienese, rather than Florentine, and that it was here the Republic made its last stand: and that, by the way, may have something to do with the really incredible beauty of the maidens hereabout. Of the churches and their treasures, as of Montalcino itself, I shall say more anon; but of the inn I will speak at once out of the fullness of my heart, for it is a hostelry in a thousand.

There is much talk in every guide-book, from Herr Baedeker through Murray to Joanne, of hotels—first-class, second-class,

and tolerable, as they say in their curt, unexpansive way; but what does the ordinary traveller always on the look-out for the disgusting luxury of the "Ritz" or the "Carlton" or the "Waldorf Astoria" understand, I should like to know, of inns? Pure nothing. So long as he gets his money's worth of gilded and gaudy rooms, of rich food, lifts, electric apparatus, and other follies, he is content to put up with being a number like a convict and with being robbed like any poor devil held up on the road. Such places have nothing to say to travellers. Let us thank God for it. The inns I know in half a hundred places in Italy—in S. Gimignano, for instance, in Castel-Fiorentino, in Foligno, in Fivizzano, in Narni, and Volterra—are human places, where you will find friends, a soft bed, well-cooked food, a good wine, and a welcome. These places should be treasured in the memory and not too easily or widely published abroad; for an inn may be spoiled by its guests. Nevertheless, for once, out of pure charity and love of my fellow-men, I will praise the inn of the Lily (which Herr Baedeker calls tolerable) at Montalcino. I will say that it is the best I know, that I have been happy there, and that there I lived like a king. At night I slept soft and clean, I ate well and punctually at the hours I had appointed, I was welcomed and I made friends, and from there I issued forth to see the magnificent town of Montalcino, tomb of the Sienese Republic; thither again I returned when I would, glad at heart, as to my own home.

You enter it out of the narrow street by a low door that brings you straight into a great odoriferous kitchen with an open hearth, where there are always many good folk at work at their victuals, and where, as I think properly, the host and his family dwell. The place is no rat-hole where they stew messes in secret, but open to all; the floor is cold stone and you may spill wine upon it and do no hurt, and you may talk there with the company and rejoice in your fellow-men. The time to see it at its best is about noon on a market-day, when it resembles nothing so much as the Italian Chamber during a debate; but for me, I love it most at evening, when the

guests are few but rare of their kind, and when, if it be winter, you may be cosy by the fire and smoke and talk with your host, who is a travelled man, or with the Farmacista, who is a learned one and a graduate of the University of Rome, or with your hostess, who is all for comfort, or with some ancient of the village who remembers everything, or with some benighted friar whose important day's work has included the exorcising of a witch, or with the young men of the village, who are full of their affairs, or very softly with the daughter of the tobacconist, who is all a mother. If you want character, here it is; if you want entertainment, here you may find it; if politics be your hobby, here you may get your fill of them; and if love be your theme, you will hear many astonishing things and find an attentive listener. How can I praise you as I ought, O inn of the Lily, or wish you well enough? May you prosper always but not too much, may you ever be full of the world about you, may you gather in many strangers but not too many, and may S. Cristofano see to it that all these things come true for you.

As for the bedrooms of the inn of the Lily, they are the sweetest and the cleanest in all Tuscany, and every one of them—there are but few—has a different and a perfect view. One looks, it may be, towards Buonconvento and one towards Pienza, but the fairest of all looks across the near valleys, over the olive gardens to the blue hills and Mont' Amiata, and that is the one for me.

Seeing, then, that all these things are as they are, it is no wonder that one finds Montalcino delightful. And, indeed, who could find it anything else? It clings to the great hills high up like the nest of an eagle; it is set above the woods, across the olive gardens it looks to the desert, over the vineyards it looks to the hills.

As for its history, it has much in common with Montepulciano, for it too was a bone of contention between Florence and Siena, but its end was more glorious. For when the French on 21 April, 1555, passed out of the City of the Virgin by the Porta Romana, there went along with them,

we read, a vast company of the citizens of Siena, who loved liberty more than they loved their own city, which they left finally ruined in the hands of Charles V. This remnant of the old Republic set out with their women and children, their goods and chattels, upon the long road that leads to Montalcino, which they determined to make the last refuge of the Sienese Republic. "*Ubi cives, ibi patria*," said they, and so it was. Among that invincible company were to be found many of the noblest in the city—Tolomei, Piccolomini, Brudini, Spanuocchi. Not all reached that last refuge: some, already weak with hunger after the siege, fell by the wayside; but the indomitable remnant marched on with Montluc, "toiling along after his troopers down the dusty Roman road, the father holding the daughter's hand, the mother carrying her baby, going forth into a dreary wilderness because they would not submit to the hated Spanish rule." "Never in my life," said Montluc, "have I seen a parting so piteous. . . . At the sight of their misery I could not keep back my tears, so great was my sorrow for a people which had shown itself willing to give up so much to save its liberty."[1] All in vain. The "Republic of Siena in Montalcino" only lasted for two years, and even during that time it was ruled by the French commander. In 1559 the Montalcinesi surrendered to Duke Cosimo, who then held practically all Tuscany, save the territory of Orbetello and the city of Lucca.

Little remains in Montalcino to remind us of that forlorn and heroic hope; only the old fortress, half in ruins, and even there the arms of the Grand-Duke are the most conspicuous ornament. Yet as one wanders about the city and out on to the wild heights above it, with the mighty panorama of mountain and valley about one, it is really the Republic of Siena we remember, that unstable, inefficient but heroic government which so surely reflected the character of the Sienese, and which here, in this lovely hill town, has found a noble grave on the confines of its fatherland.

[1] Montluc, "Commentaries" (Bordeaux, 1592), fol. 107[t]. Quoted by L. Douglas, "History of Siena" (Murray, 1902), p. 262.

But history is not alone in having left its memories for us to examine, and perhaps to weep over, in Montalcino. The town is full of artistic treasures of considerable beauty and importance. In the Church of S. Agostino, for instance, now under repair, we find the choir to have been entirely covered with frescoes by Fredi, fragments of which remain, which we shall be able to study to more advantage later when a paternal Government has finally uncovered them from white-wash. Already something has been done; the old windows of the church, once simple and lovely, have been opened, and we may even to-day note the fine rose over the west door and the delicious double cloisters. Stored away in these cloisters, too, are a picture by Fredi and another by Vecchietta.

Opposite S. Agostino, in the chapel of the Sacro Sacramento, on either side of the west door, is one of those fourteenth-century Annunciations, two great wooden figures, such as we have learned to love in Castel-Fiorentino and S. Gimignano; and over an altar on the Epistle side of the chapel stands a picture of the Madonna of Mercy, very lovely in a white dress, attributed by Mr. Perkins to Tamagni.

From S. Agostino we pass into the northern part of the town to the Church of S. Francesco, where, over the western door, is a terra-cotta of the Madonna and Child with S. Peter, S. John Baptist and two angels of Robbia ware, and in a niche in the south wall a figure of S. Sebastian of the same school. The cloisters here, too, are very fine, and from the piazza in front of the church a great view of Montalcino opens before one over the ancient olives.

Descending hence into the valley to regain the city, we come as we climb again to the little Church of S. Croce, where, over the sacristy door in the south wall, is a very fine and interesting picture of the Crucifixion by Girolamo Genga, with the influence of Signorelli and Pinturicchio strong upon it. Over the high altar stands a picture of the Madonna and Child with the two Saints by Beccafumi, a genuine work from the master's hand usually called a school piece.

The most delightful church of Montalcino, however, is set some way outside it on the road to Torrenieri, and there you will find what I take to be the finest picture in the city. The church belongs to a long since suppressed Franciscan Convent of Osservanti, whose name it bears, and its great treasure is the picture of the Assumption by Girolamo di Benvenuto over the west door, which reminds one of his father's work at Asciano. Here, too, over the fourth altar, on the left, is a picture of S. Bernardino with two exquisite angels by Sano di Pietro, and opposite to it a Pietà by some pupil of Sodoma.

From the Osservanza we have a fine view of the *castello* of Montalcino, which is certainly worth a visit.

On our way back through the city we pass the Palazzo Pubblico, where there is a small picture gallery containing the ancient treasures of the churches. To take the pictures in order: (1) The Madonna and Child in a garden of roses with angels, is by Sano di Pietro; (2) The Madonna and Child is the masterpiece of Tommé, a wonderful panel, the best thing he ever did; (3) The Nativity is by Girolamo di Benvenuto; (4) The Coronation of the Virgin is the masterpiece of Fredi. This is the centre panel only of an altarpiece, the rest of which is in the gallery at Siena. (5) The Blood of the Redeemer by Girolamo di Benvenuto. It is a curious picture. Christ stands supporting the Cross between S. Angelo and S. Egidio, the Precious Blood pouring from His side over a wafer into a chalice. Above is God the Father and four angels. (6) The Deposition. This is part of an altarpiece by Bartolo di Fredi, signed and dated, the four saints (two panels) high up on the end wall belong to it, as do two panels of the Baptism and a scene from the Life of S. Philip of Montalcino here. In the background is the Cathedral of Siena. (7) High up on the window wall is a Madonna and Child with two angels, a fine and interesting work by Tommé. (8) Scenes from the Life of S. Philip of Montalcino. These two panels on either side the window probably belong to the Deposition altarpiece (No. 6). (9) The

Madonna and Child is a spoiled and very wonderful early Pacchiarotto, according to Mr. Perkins. Mr. Berenson, however, calls it a Francesco di Giorgio.

On leaving the delightful little gallery, if you will take my advice you will climb up to the *fortezza*, where the Republic of Siena made its last stand, and so making your way into the hills above the city look over the world. It is wild and beautiful and mysterious enough to be worth all the fatigue of the way. Moreover, the road which leaves the city thus by the hills will bring you in some eight miles to the forgotten abbey of S. Antimo and so to the railway that joins Asciano to Grosseto at Mont' Amiata Station.

The Abbey of S. Antimo was in the Middle Age one of the greater Benedictine monasteries in Italy, and indeed it was the most formidable ecclesiastical feud in Tuscany, with the exceptions of the Badia S. Salvatore in Mont' Amiata and the Badia S. Galgano in the Val di Merse. Moreover, it was, and still is even in its ruin, one of the best examples in Italy of Romanesque architecture, or rather of that kind of Romanesque peculiar to the eleventh century. "It is precisely in these new ecclesiastical structures," writes Canestrelli —new, that is, as being the production of a world awakened to a new youth by the passing of the millennium which was supposed to bring the world to an end—"it is precisely in these new ecclesiastical structures that we see the earliest examples of that transitional style of architecture which continued to develop itself through the eleventh, twelfth, and part of the thirteenth centuries, and to which the name of Romanesque was justly given because in the world of art its development was coeval and corresponded with that of the *Romance* tongues in the world of Literature." Whatever we may think of that explanation, we may note that one of the most notable features of this new style was the substitution of the vaulted stone roofs for the older wooden ones; now though this was of slow growth, beginning with the covering of the aisles when the nave was still roofed with wood, it became at last universal, though the mixed style was long used in Italy

even in the twelfth century, when it seems the Abbey of S. Antimo was built.

As we see it to-day even, the Church of S. Antimo seems to us perhaps the most beautiful interior in Tuscany, though the Cathedrals of Pisa and Lucca are maybe more firmly established in our hearts. But in any case it is so fine that it is worth any trouble to see, and since it lies within an easy drive of Montalcino and on the direct road to the railway it should on no account be missed. The country, too, is wild and beautiful to a degree we had not thought perhaps Tuscany could boast, and all the way Mont' Amiata guards the horizon. So lonely and so wide is this stretch of almost unknown upland that when in the gathering twilight one sees the few lights even of the wretched huts about Mont' Amiata station one feels a sort of relief. And for me at least it was with a kindness I had never felt before for any railway that I entered the train there and returned to Torrenieri.[1]

[1] From Torrenieri it is easy to reach Grosseto, Orbetello, and the towns of the Maremma. I propose to deal with the Maremma in another volume.

XXII

CASTIGLIONE D' ORCIA AND RADICOFANI

FROM Orbetello (should you visit that town on this journey) there are two ways by which it is possible to return into Tuscany—the one by road, the other by rail. The route by road leads through Manciano, once a possession of the Abbey of S. Salvatore in Mont' Amiata, with its splendid Rocca of the Aldobrandeschi of Sovana, through Pitigliano of the Counts of the name, where in the Duomo is a fine picture by Cozzarelli of the Madonna and Child with S. Peter and S. Francis, painted in 1484, to Aquapendente and Radicofani in the Via Francigena—two days' journey by carriage. This wild and beautiful road passes through a little-known country to the south of Mont' Amiata, crossing the Fiora, the principal river of that mountain, just beyond Manciano. The easier way by rail will bring you back so far as Torrenieri, where a good sort of carriage can be hired for the drive along Via Francigena to Radicofani, taking Castiglione d' Orcia on the way.

Leaving Torrenieri early in the morning, it is not difficult to reach Radicofani by nightfall. The road passes through S. Quirico, and so into the wilder country of Val d' Orcia between Mont' Amiata and the Cetona mountains with Radicofani always before one, rising out of the midst of the valley like a haggard boast, threatening but empty. To visit

Castiglione d' Orcia—and it is very worthy of a visit—it is necessary to leave the Via Francigena at the Baths of Vignone just where the road crosses the Orcia, and to climb the steep road on the right into this little forlorn fortress of a town which was able so effectually to hold the Roman road at the mouth of so difficult a pass.

Castiglione d' Orcia was one of the many fortresses in this difficult and lonely country in the possession of the Aldobrandeschi of Santfiora. Santa Fiora[1] itself, their capital and almost impregnable fortress, high up on the southern flank of Mont' Amiata, gave them no control of the Roman road which it must have been one of their chief necessities to obtain. The great castle of Radicofani, which certainly held it, they were never able to get possession of, for when the Abbey of S. Salvatore declined, it was already in the hands of Siena and the Holy See. The control of the Via Francigena, which enabled them to rob any caravan that came by, and practically to hold up the trade of Siena with the Eternal City, was given them by this little fortress of Castiglione d' Orcia, and, as one might suppose, it was the first of their possessions to be wrested from them by the Sienese. In 1250 the Commune of Siena took the *castello*; but even then they had not done with it, for twenty years after the battle of Montaperto it formed a nest for the Sienese *fuorusciti*, and was only taken after a siege of forty days, and then by chance. It was not really till April, 1300, that the Sienese made themselves masters of the place, when the Counts of S. Fiora were compelled to renounce for ever their dominion in the place, and received a payment of 3,000 florins in compensation. In 1368, when Siena was ruled by the *Dodici*, Castiglione came into the hands of the Salimbeni, who built there the *castello* whose ruins we now see. Their rule lasted till 1418, when the place was once more incorporated

[1] For a description and the history of S. Fiora, as for the whole of Mont' Amiata, see my "In Unknown Tuscany," with notes by William Heywood (Methuen, 1909). There a complete history of the Aldobrandeschi is given, pp. 139–164.

within the dominion of the Republic. Over a hundred years later, in 1554, the Imperial army was able to enter the place without encountering any resistance; by then, doubtless, the fortress was practically useless. One's chief delight in Castiglione d' Orcia to-day is certainly its extraordinary position, but for me at least its wealth of pictures is something by no means to be ignored. The three great churches are full of fine things; even the *pieve* dedicated to SS. Stefano e Degno, though it has nothing else, possesses a beautiful picture of our Lady by Pietro Lorenzetti, that is not only a miracle picture, but also a curious and very interesting work of art. It is, however, in S. Maria Maddalena, in S. Simeone and S. Stefano, that the chief treasures of Castiglione d' Orcia are hid.

In S. Maria Maddalena, for instance, there is a magnificent panel picture of the Madonna by Lippo Memmi, a thing so fair and devout that one might be accounted fortunate to see it at the price of a day's journey, yet in the same church there is a delightful, though damaged, work by Vecchietta—the Madonna and Child with four Angels. Nor is this all, for in S. Simeone not far away there is a fine Madonna of Mercy by Bartolo di Fredi, and a splendid panel picture of the Madonna and Child by Giovanni di Paolo.

Castiglione d' Orcia will not hold you long, however, for the glory of the road truly begins only when you have left it.

At first on that wonderful road you pass through Val d' Orcia, then climbing slowly in the sunset, the beautiful cities begin to shine about you—Castiglione d' Orcia that you have just left; Pienza, that lovely vanity; Montepulciano, like a rose on the hills; and before you, between the mountains, the scarped ruin of Radicofani soars like an eagle over the valley and the road to Rome. Nightfall should find you there in the little *albergo* under the ruined fortress of Ghino di Tacco.

Originally belonging to the monks of S. Salvatore in Mont' Amiata, Radicofani, the most splendidly situated of all the fortresses on the Roman road, was divided in 1253, and half the *castello* given by the Abbot to Pope Eugenius III and his

successors. Later, the place formed the last fortress of the Patrimony of S. Peter, or the last fortress of the Sienese, as it happened, for both possessed it, the one after the other, during many years. Finally it came to Siena, and later, like all the rest of the Sienese *castella*, it formed a part of the Granducato of Tuscany.

To-day Radicofani is a little naked village straggling round the jagged hill under the fortress, with three churches, a fine clock-tower, many old houses and a beautiful palace, evidently the Palazzo del Governo, now a prison, covered with coats of arms; while without the gates are a Capuchin convent, a pretty place enough, among trees too, now secularized; and the old Posta, "The Great Duke's Inn," where Richard Lassels on his way to Rome in the seventeenth century tells us he dined. "From Siena," he says, "we went to *Bon Convento*, *Tornieri*, *S. Quirico*, an inconsiderable place upon the rode, and so to Radicofano, a strong *Castle* upon a high hill built by *Desiderius*, *King of the Longobards*. This is the last place of the *Florentine State*, but not the least in strength. Dineing here at the *Great Duke's Inn*, at the bottom of the hill, we went to lodge at *Acquapendente*, which is some twelve miles off, and the first toune of the Pope's State."

Of the three churches within the walls, S. Antonio beside S. Pietro in the little Piazza sopra Mura looking towards Rome contains nothing; but as though to make up for the emptiness of his brother, S. Pietro has a wealth of beautiful things, the work of the Robbias, whom, as I suppose, the Sforza of Santa Fiora brought here, when, as their arms over the Palazzo del Governo go to show, they ruled in the place. Entering the church by the western door, over the first altar to the right is a statue of S. Catherine made of that humble terra-cotta we know so well, and enamelled simply white—a touching and lovely piece of work one is surprised to find in this lonely place. But then, since all the guide-books have ignored Radicofani, as they have ignored Mont' Amiata, one expects to find nothing there, whereas both Radicofani and

Santa Fiora are as rich in della Robbia ware as any city in Tuscany, save Florence. Here in S. Pietro opposite that statue of S. Catherine on the first altar to the left is a lovely altarpiece of blue and white with Madonna in the midst, with S. John Baptist on one side and S. Antonio of Padua, with his pig, on the other. In the right transept is another splendid altarpiece of the Crucifixion, with S. Mary Magdalen kneeling at the foot of the Cross; and in the left transept yet another, Madonna in the midst, with S. Catherine of Alexandria and S. Michael Archangel. In the little church of S. Agata, in the main street of Radicofani, we find their work again, in the great altarpiece behind the high altar, of Madonna between S. Francesco, S. Agata, S. Lorenzo, and S. Catherine. On the left wall of the nave, high up in a little cupboard, is hidden a curious and tiny model in plaster of Radicofani itself, with Madonna above, protecting it, together with S. Agata and S. Emilio.

How did the Robbia clan come to so far-away a place as this? And who were they of all those we may name? It might seem certain that the Sforza lords of S. Fiora in the fifteenth century, as we know, holding Radicofani, too, as Podestà brought Andrea della Robbia and his pupils, perhaps not only to Santa Fiora, where so much of their work remains, but to Radicofani also, where in the small but beautiful churches even to-day their work, so full of coolness in the summer heats, shines with the country flowers upon the altars not less in place than they.

S. Pietro, too, the parish church, has a treasure less tangible, certainly, but perhaps to some of us at any rate not less precious than its della Robbia ware—a legend "of the judgement which befell a very great and cruel usurer of the town of Radicofani." Fra Filippo tells the tale in his "Ensamples."

"There was," says he, "in the town of Radicofani a wretched man; and albeit he became very old, it might be said of him as saith the proverb: 'Accursed is the child of a hundred years old.' All the days of his life this wretched

man lent money upon usury, and never had he any sickness. And although he had many vices, especially was he covetous and avaricious and cruel, and an enemy of the poor, in far greater measure than the devil had known how to make him; and rather would he that the victuals and other things which at any time remained over in his house should be flung away than that they should be given to the poor; and never was he seen to give alms, nor was he willing that any should be given in his house. Now when his accursed days were ended, he was smitten suddenly with an apoplexy; wherefore they laid him upon his bed. Afterward two young men were sent for a venerable physician of very holy life, who was a native of the town and dwelt therein. And this befell between two and three hours after nightfall. And when the physician had departed from his house toward the house of the sick man, and had gone half way thither, albeit the weather was clear and calm, and the heaven was full of stars, and no cloud was to be seen in the sky, yet there came a passing great thundering and lightening so that all men were astonied; and, when he had reached the door of the house, there followed another thunder clap with lightning twice as great as at the first, and, in like manner, all men were stunned thereby. And afterward, when he had entered the courtyard, and would have gone into the chamber of the wretched sick man, there came a third flash of lightning with a thundering so horrible that it stunned whomsoever was in the chamber; and the physician and those who were with him in the house fell to the ground, and all the windows of the chamber where the sick man lay were broken and burst open, and all the lights which were in the house were put out; and they remained prostrate upon the ground for the space of a quarter of an hour or more; and so terrified were they that none of them dared to raise himself up. Afterward, at the last, they lighted a lamp and went to the sick man and found him dead. And thus the devil carried away his soul.

"Now, when I had already written the aforesaid ensample divers times, according as it had been told me by the son of

the said physician, I afterward heard it from the lips of the physician himself, the which was a man of credit, at least ninety years old, of holy life, and a passing venerable person. He told me that there came on a sudden so great rain and hail and tempest that it seemed that all the town must be swallowed up; and all the house trembled, and all the tiles of the roof thereof were beaten together; and whoever was in the chamber swooned away, and, in the morning, all along the road which led from the house of the dead usurer out of Radicofani, for seven miles, the ground was covered with toads. And on one side of the road, and on the other, the trees and vines and thickets were all broken and splintered. And neither before nor after in that mountain of Radicofani was there ever seen a single toad. Moreover, the physician told me that the priest of the town buried that usurer in the church for money; wherefore afterward, in the night-time, there were heard such knockings and such tempest and clamour in the church, that no man in all the town might sleep therefrom. Wherefore in the morning, the people of the town hastened to the church and dug up that wretched body, and buried it without the town in the most base and shameful place that they could find."

It is, however, to a more admirable villain that our thoughts continually turn, as we look up to the Rocca, that strange, fierce, almost grotesque fortress, ruined now, which under rain or sun dominates the whole village, and hangs there in the sky like some threatening stemma, some fantastic coat of arms. The country folk tell you that Ghino di Tacco still haunts the valley of the Paglia, and here in his own mountain, certainly, the remembrance of the man whose victim Dante met in Purgatory is never very far away:—

> "Quivi era l'Aretin, che dalle braccia
> Fiere di Ghin di Tacco ebbe la morte."
> (Canto vi 13–14.)

But little, doubtless, remains of the fortress Ghino built on that mountain-top, whose scarped height overlooks not only

the valley of Paglia and the road to Rome, but the valley of Orcia, and the way to Siena, the pass over Cetona, too, and the roads to Chiusi and Umbria. As you climb to-day up that rough, steep way, among the stones to where, sailing high in air, the ruined castle still leers across the world, it is the remnants of the Sienese and Papal stronghold you pass, and yet it is certainly not of them you are thinking, but of the cruel exploits of that ruined gentleman, turned highwayman, who slew Benincasa to avenge his father, and captured the Abbot of Cligni, and won thereby peace for a little, but fell at last under the daggers, perhaps of the Counts of Santa Fiora, who hated him, and whom he hated.

Ghino di Tacco is a characteristic figure of his time. There must have been many such in Italy when the *Signorotti*, having acquired their lordships rather than conquered them, as Aquarone insists, and the opportunity for any personal enterprise of the sort having passed away, many a patrician found himself almost starving and at the mercy of the crowd in the city where he lived or had taken refuge. This seems to have been Ghino's case. There are many theories of his birth, but Aquarone, following Tommasi in this, comes to the conclusion that he was the son of Tacco Monaceschi de' Pecorai da Torrita. However this may be, Ghino was brought up as a boy to a wild and violent life till his family, his father, his brother Turino, and himself, "disgusted with the Republic" as Gigli says, were *cacciata di Siena*, expelled from Siena, Boccaccio tells us, one day in 1279. They became robbers, haunting the way between Siena and Asinalunga, till one day Siena thought fit to attend to them with a force some six hundred strong. They occupied Torrita. One day when Ghino was away on the road, Tacco his father, and Turino his brother were taken by the Sienese and imprisoned in Siena, and later tried before Messer Benincasa di Laterina, in the Aretino, Vicar of the Podestà. They were hanged; but Ghino was free, and, as Aquarone puts it, while he was at large "the air of Siena no longer suited Messer Benincasa." So he sought some other business, elsewhere, and having no

little reputation in jurisprudence, he became *Auditor Papæ* and went to Rome. Even there, as it proved, he was not safe. Ghino was not to be denied. He had often looked up to the height of Radicofani as he lurked in the valley, perhaps often hidden there to spy out his prey, on a summer evening, when the stars shine like jewels in a monstrance round that spotless Host the moon. So, tired of robbing on the road as a common highwayman, and hoping to make himself still a lord, he determined to secure himself in that place. Nor was it long before it happened so, for with him to think was to act. And once established there like a bird of prey, he sat all day looking towards Rome. It was perhaps dawn when he set out with "some four hundred of his brigands," as Gigli says, all on swift horses, heartily ready. Through that dawn and the day and the night they rode to Rome. They surprised a gate and held it. Then Ghino, with a few followers, rode through the city on to the Capitol, where he knew he would find Benincasa about his business. There indeed, "in an upper room at audience," he found him, killed him on the very judgment-seat, and taking his head, came away without hindrance. And re-mounting his horse, he rode in the midst of his few followers through the city, leaving it by the same gate through which he had come in, and so back to Radicofani, that he was then able to call his own.

Now it was with something of the same persistent violence, less sinister, but not less fearless, that the enemy of God, the Pope, and the Counts of Santa Fiora made his peace with Boniface VIII, as Boccaccio tells us, yet he came to die at last like a gentleman truly, and a lord, at bay, fighting, stabbed by a hundred wounds.

"Ghino di Tacco," Boccaccio tells us in Elisa's story from the second novel on the last day of the *Decameron*—"Ghino di Tacco, a man both for his boldness and for his robberies sufficiently famous, being banished from Siena, and at enmity with the Counts of Santa Fiora, caused Radicofani to revolt from the rule of the Church of Rome, and establishing himself there, he and his band robbed throughout the

neighbourhood. Now Boniface VIII being Pope in Rome, the Abbot of Cligni came to Court, and he was believed to be one of the richest Prelates in the world. His stay at Court having somewhat injured his digestion, he was advised by the doctors to go to the Baths of Siena, where he would be cured without a doubt. Obtaining leave from the Pope, without caring for the fame of Ghino, he set out on his road with much pomp of harness and baggage, with many horses and a whole retinue of servants. Ghino di Tacco, hearing of his coming, set his snares, and without losing the meanest stable-boy, in a narrow place captured the Abbot, with all his household and his possessions. This done, he sent, well accompanied, to the Abbot one of the wiliest of his men, who on his behalf told him very politely that he must be pleased to dismount and to visit Ghino in the Castello. When the Abbot heard this he was furious, and replied that he wanted for nothing, that one like himself had nothing to do with Ghino; but that he would continue on his way, and he would like to see who would stop him. To whom the Ambassador, speaking humbly, said: 'Messere, you are come to a part where, save for the power of God, nothing makes us afraid, and where excommunications and interdicts are themselves excommunicated; and therefore it would be better to satisfy Ghino in this.' During this conversation the place had already been surrounded by brigands, so that the Abbot, seeing himself and those with him prisoners, very scornfully followed the Ambassador towards the Castello, and there went along with him all his people and all his harness. Dismounting there, as Ghino wished, he was placed all alone in a small room of the palace, rather dark and inconvenient, and all his household, each according to his quality, was well lodged, and as for the horses and the baggage, they were taken good care of, no one touching anything. Later Ghino himself went to the Abbot and said to him: 'Messere Ghino, whose guest you are, sends praying you to be pleased to tell him where you are going, and on what occasion.' The Abbot, who, like a wise man, had already abated some of his haughti-

ness, told him where he was going, and why. When Ghino heard this, he went off, determined to cure him without any baths. Having ordered a great fire to be kept constantly burning in the Abbot's room, which was small, he did not re-visit him till the next morning, and then in the whitest napkin he brought him two slices of bread, toasted, and a great cup of vernaccia da Corniglia, the Abbot's own, and said to him: 'Messere, when Ghino was very young he studied in medicine, and he says that there will never be a better medicine for your complaint than that he will give you, of which these things which I bring are the beginning; and therefore partake of them and be comforted.' The Abbot, who had rather eat than be witty, though still with a certain disdain, ate the bread and drank the vernaccia; then he began to say many things, a little haughtily, asking many things and advising many things, and especially he demanded that he might see Ghino himself. Hearing this, Ghino took no notice of much that he said, answered courteously the rest, and declaring that Ghino would visit him very soon, departed, only returning on the following day again with toasted bread and vernaccia; and so he did many days, till he found the Abbot had eaten some dried beans which he had purposely carried and left there; then on behalf of Ghino he asked the Abbot how he was. The Abbot replied: 'It appears to me that I should be well enough if I were out of his hands; after that I should have no greater desire than to eat, so thoroughly have his remedies cured me.'

"Ghino then had a beautiful room prepared with the Abbot's own belongings, and caused a fine banquet to be set out, to which, with many men of the Castello, were invited all the household of the Abbot. The following morning he went to him and said: 'Messere, since you feel well, it is time you should quit this infirmary.' Then taking him by the hand, he led him into the room he had prepared; and leaving him there with his own people he went off to make sure the banquet should be magnificent. The Abbot amused himself

a little with his people, and gave them an account of his life, while they, on the other hand, told him how surpassing well they had been entertained by Ghino. But the hour for dining was come; the Abbot and the others were nobly entertained with excellent food and wines, though Ghino did not even then declare himself. When the Abbot had been treated in this fashion for some days, Ghino, having made them put all his goods into a great room, and all his horses, even to the last pony, into a court under it, went to the Abbot and asked him how he felt, and whether he thought himself well enough to go on horseback. And the Abbot replied that he felt well enough, and was indeed thoroughly cured, and that he would be perfectly well if he could only get out of Ghino's hands. Then Ghino brought him into the room where were all his goods and all his whole household, and causing him to look from a window at all his horses, he said: 'Messere Abate, you ought to know that it is not wickedness of heart which has caused Ghino di Tacco—for I am he—to become a highway robber and an enemy of the Court of Rome, but rather his position as a gentleman, driven from his own house, and the necessity to defend his life and nobility against many powerful enemies; but you appear to be an honourable lord, and as I have cured you of your illness, I do not intend to treat you as I should another who should fall into my hands, taking from him what might please me. On the contrary, I intend that, having considered my necessities, you should give me what you think is owing. Here is all that is yours: from that window you see your horses in the courtyard; take, therefore, either a part or the whole as it shall please you; from this hour you may go or stay, as you will.

"The Abbot, astonished to hear such generous words from a highwayman, being much delighted, felt his anger and disdain suddenly dissolve into kindness, and in his heart grew a wish to become Ghino's friend. Running to him to embrace him, he said: 'I swear to God that to gain the friendship of such a one as I take you to be, I might well suffer a deeper injury than you have inflicted on me here. Cursed be the evil

fortune which has led you to such a damnable life as this!' Then taking only a few necessities and some of his horses, he left the rest to Ghino, and returned to Rome.

"Now the Pope had heard of the Abbot's capture, and had been much distressed by it. When he saw him he asked him if the baths had benefited him; to which the Abbot smilingly answered: 'Holy Father, I found, before arriving at the baths, a physician who has thoroughly cured me.' Then he told him the story, and urged thereto by his generosity, asked a favour. The Pope, imagining that he would ask some other thing, freely granted him what he would ask. 'Holy Father,' said the Abbot, 'what I wish of you is, that you give a free pardon to Ghino di Tacco, my doctor, because, among all estimable people I have met, he is the most worthy, and the harm he does is to be imputed rather to bad fortune than to an evil heart; change, then, this bad fortune by giving him something from which he can live according to his position, and I do not doubt but that in a little time he will pay you as he has paid me.' Hearing this the Pope, who had a great soul and loved valiant men, said he would do it willingly if, indeed, it was as he said. With this promise, Ghino came to Court, where the Pope, soon convinced of his worth and reconciled to him, gave him a great priory with a hospital, and made a knight of him. There he remained the friend and servant of Holy Church and of the Abbot of Cligni as long as he lived."

Thus far Boccaccio, but Benvenuto da Imola tells us that the Pope created him Cavaliere di S. Giovanni, and that in his benefice he maintained *splendida vita.* As Knight of S. John, and the Pope's very good friend, he doubtless found it easier to deal with the Sienese Republic. Later Benvenuto tells us he retired to Fratta, perhaps his native village, a *castello* between Torrita and Sinalunga in Val di Chiana. However that may be, not long after his son Dino became Archbishop of Pisa. The Counts of Santa-Fiora, however, would not pardon him nor give him peace. As great robbers as himself, it may be they resented his success, and especially his peace with the Church. One day as he went about in Sinalunga he was set

upon by a number of armed men, Benvenuto tells us, and bravely defending himself, but in vain, he fell, pierced by a thousand wounds.

So much for Ghino. But though his ghost truly haunts, as I know, those terrible ruins above Radicofani, it is hardly that fact which will interest the ordinary traveller who has in the sweat of his brow climbed so far in the spring or autumn sunshine to see something more than an old ruin, howsoever bizarre and wonderful. And he is right. The great thing to be had at Radicofani is the view—such a view as I think you may find nowhere else in all Tuscany, so wide it is, so majestic, and so beautiful. Let us remind ourselves of it. Across the deep and bitter ravine to the west rises Mont' Amiata, an incredibly great and lovely thing, with Abbadia S. Salvatore just visible on the verge of the woods. To the north lies the Senese with its shining cities, with Siena itself visible at evening on the skirts of the farthest hills. To the east lies the splendid range of Cetona with its tiny scattered villages and lofty, sweeping outline, shutting out Umbria and her hills. And to the south? To the south lies the whole breadth of the Patrimony. No one who has once looked southward from Radicofani is ever likely to forget what he has seen. It is one of the great vistas of the world. It almost gives you Rome. Evening is the hour when that world stretched for your joy at your feet is most lovely, and strangely enough most visible, for in the heat of the day a veil of mist hides it from the boldest eyes. But at night, when far and far away across the Umbrian hills, like a horn of pallid gold, like a silver sickle for some precious harvest, the moon hangs over the world, then little by little in her light that world at your feet becomes visible, at first never so faintly, as though still hidden in some impalpable but lovely veil. To the far right, to the south of the Mountain, Castellazzara hangs over the precipice of Monte Civitella, like the nest of an eagle. Dimly in the lovely obscurity S. Casciano rises behind Celle on the flanks of Monte Cetona. Somewhere lost in the southern valleys Piceno is hidden among the vines, Acquapendente behind

her fantastic rocks. They in truth are rather felt than seen, only far away Lago di Bolesna shines like a jewel, Monte Cimino rises like a ghost beside Monte Venere, eternally separated the one from the other by the faint line of hills like a bow, against which Montefiascone rises like a lovely thought in the unbreakable silence, the papal city of Viterbo lies like a white rose. And last of all in the farthest distance Monte Soracte, the holy mountain, guards the desert of the Campagna and the immortal thing which it has brought forth —the City of Rome.

XXIII

SARTEANO, CETONA, AND CHIUSI

THE road from Radicofani for Chiusi runs north-east quite round Ghino's stronghold across the upper valley of the Orcia, and after passing under the shadow of Monte Cetona it crosses that beautiful range of great hills and comes once more, though still at some height, into the Chiana valley at the quiet and beautiful little town of Sarteano. The views all the way, and especially after crossing the shoulder of Cetona, are of an extraordinary loveliness. Far away stand the hills of Umbria, the great snow-capped mountains of the Central Apennines. Nearer, across the Chiana valley on the lower skirts of the great bastions that support the central range, lie innumerable little shining cities, among them Cortona, Castiglione Fiorentino, Passignano, and Magione. Nearer still, on their separate hill-tops, where they stand like statues on their pedestals, are Montepulciano, Pienza, Chiusi, and Città della Pieve, while on this side the valley at our feet lie Sarteano, Cetona, and an endless array of villages.

One writes down these beautiful names, one repeats them to oneself, but when that is done, what has been accomplished? Nothing or very little. Who can describe that world of hill and valley so happily peopled with all that is most precious in the world? Who may rightly speak of the sky that covers so softly this world in which we may find all our dreams? Who can conjure up its sunshine or express the glory of its colouring, its majesty and tenderness? To write of such a thing is to

understand the impotence of words in our dealings with Nature or with God. Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh, but in vain to those who have never seen the sun, or for whom the sky is always as far off as it is in England.

Sarteano lies in a cup of the hills under an ancient castle some five miles from Chiusi, and some fifteen from Radicofani. It is a populous little town with two parochial churches, one of which, SS. Lorenzo e Apollinare, is the Collegiata. Sarteano has been a fortified place at least since the eleventh century, when it was in the power of certain Orvietan Counts, who, according to Repetti, came of a branch of the Conti Senesi della Berardenga and della Scialenga, so omnipotent, as we have seen, between Asciano and Montepulciano. About 1255 the Counts called Manenti, who held Sarteano, submitted to the Commune of Siena; but in 1264, when Charles of Anjou was in Rome, they rebelled and renewed their alliance with the Guelfs of Orvieto. Therefore the Sienese sent an expedition in the very next year to bring them to reason.

Nevertheless the Counts continued to hold Sarteano till the middle of the fourteenth century as feudatories of Siena, for they were a useful and a warlike race. They seem to have been ready to serve any master for the sake of war, and their almost artistic joy in the work they could do so well seems to be shown in the fact that they fought equally for Siena and for Florence. Such was the Count Manenti who, in 1292, with the title of Contestabile, led an army against Pisa for the Florentines, and such were his descendants who in 1325 officered the Guelf League in Val di Nievole against Castruccio Castracane, the greatest soldier of his time. Their valour seems to have filled even their doubtful descendants, for in 1339 we see a certain Neroccio, a natural son of one of the Counts, fighting in the Florentine army, and in 1344 a certain Count Manfredi held Pescia for the same Republic, while as late as 1353 one of them at the head of a Florentine expedition seized the territory of Cetona. They were a race of soldiers, and that they lasted so well might seem to prove

that their rule in Sarteano had some virtue, and what we know of the liberties of the town confirms us in coming to such a conclusion. Indeed, in the fourteenth century little but the name of Conte seems to have remained to them of their ancient power. It seems, then, that already in the fourteenth century the people of Sarteano were free : they appear to have remained so till, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, by a convention of that year, they came into the dominion of Siena : thereafter they paid tribute, and their story does not differ much from that of Lucignano. After 1401 they were compelled to elect a Sienese as Potestà every six months, and to pay him a salary of a thousand *lire*, as well as, among other things, to deliver up their *castello* to a *castellano*, elected every six months by the Commune of Siena, to make peace or war as that Commune should direct, and to hold as friends or enemies those whom she should choose, to offer Siena in the month of August a *palio* of scarlet of the value of 25 gold florins, and this for twelve years. The convention was renewed all through the fifteenth century, and thus Sarteano came into the Sienese dominion, as perhaps its most formidable fortress on the south-east frontier. In 1556 its fate was the same as that of its sisters, and its history closes when it entered the dominion of Cosimo I.

Charming as Sarteano is, with its old fortress and quiet country churches, it is to be loved not alone for its outward beauty, but for the treasures it hides. In the Villa Bargagli is a collection of Etruscan antiquities of no great fame or interest. In the Collegiata, rebuilt, alas! in 1723, there is a fine picture of the Annunciation by Pacchia, while in S. Martino there is another picture of the same subject painted in 1546. In the Misericordia Church, too, there is a work by Benvenuto di Giovanni, a picture representing S. Bernardino of Siena and S. Antony of Padua. Nor is this all, for Signor Sestilio Barni has a fine altarpiece by Andrea di Niccolò, a pupil perhaps of Matteo di Giovanni, an artist, too, who came under the influence of Neroccio. There we see the Madonna and Child with S. Roch and S. Sebastian, and a *predella* of

small scenes from the life of S. Roch, who was especially venerated in Sarteano.

Sarteano lies but five miles from Chiusi by the direct road, but it is pleasanter to proceed thither, I think, by Cetona. The way lies south and east across the hills from Sarteano —a distance of not more than three miles. Almost at our setting out we pass the Madonna di Belriguardo, an ancient public oratory of Sarteano, and then, descending the hills, we presently come into the little town of Cetona, looking directly across the wide Chiana valley to Città della Pieve in Umbria.

Cetona is a languid little place lying in the shadow of its great ruined *castello*, which crowns one of the last eastern spurs of the Cetona range. And just as at Lucignano we found a fortress of the Sienese guarding her confines where they ran with those of Arezzo and Florence, just as Radicofani was the last Rocca of Siena southward on the range of the Patrimony, so here at Cetona we see the last castle of Siena on the confines of the territory of Orvieto and Perugia, that made a part of the Papal States. Its business, according to Siena, was to hold the frontier on her behalf. This can never have been a very comfortable business in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, when war was always about to break out, and raids and private expeditions were of daily occurrence. All these little frontier towns were continually changing hands, and we may believe that their policy was perforce something like that of the rival *condottieri*, who preferred war in much the same way as a learned man might prefer philosophy, and often with much less disastrous results.

Cetona must have known a hundred masters. What she was originally, how she rose, who called her into being, we know not. Many have given her an origin as ancient as that of Chiusi, and they may be right, but we have nothing to support any such theory. Indeed, we are quite ignorant of Cetona till, in 1264, by a convention between Siena and the troops of Manfred, in the command of Conte Guido Morello, his vicar in Tuscany against the Orvietans, the Conte was given leave to recover among other places both Sarteano and

Cetona. That might seem to suggest that the Sienese had already certain rights in Cetona which might be "recovered"; but who can decide at this time of day as to the grounds of the claims of Siena over this small place?

It would be tedious to go into all the changes of fortune Cetona experienced during the next two centuries; sometimes she was held by the Sienese, sometimes by the Orvietans. She lay at the mercy of Albornoz in 1365, and in 1367 gave herself freely to Urban V, but in 1375 she was handed over to the Emperor, who gave her in feud to the Counts of Cervara, who held her till 1418, when Braccio da Montone, after defeating Carlo Malatesta of Rimini, general of the Perugians, took Cetona from them, destroyed the *castello*, and made the place over to the Sienese. Then, in 1455, came Jacopo di Niccolò Piccinino, the *condottiere* and adventurer, who took the place, and set up there Puccino de' Puccini of Perugia, but the Sienese threw him out, and in 1458 rebuilt the fortress.

Cetona had felt every great movement of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, nor did she escape the disasters of the sixteenth. Both Duke Valentino, Cesare Borgia, and Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, took her and departed on their way, the one to turn out Pandolfo Petrucci, the other to reinstate the *fuorisciti* in Siena. At that time the Cetonesi seem to have been faithful to Siena, nor was the Republic ungrateful. Thus encouraged, they proved to be the last town to forgo allegiance when the government of the Republic retired to Montalcino. They were overcome, however, by Mario Sforza of Santa Fiora in January, 1556, and forced to enter the dominion of Cosimo I.

The ancient *rocca* of Cetona, which has thus seen the whole history of Italy clang by up and down the valley of the Chiana, was in 1650 restored and made habitable, and has for long been in the possession of the Terrosi family, who have turned it into a delicious *casino*, whence one overlooks the whole Val di Chiana. The town or village beneath it is still surrounded by an old wall with three gates, one of them leading to the

rocca. The finest building in the town, apart from the churches, is the Palazzo Terrosi, with its delightful *boschetti* and gardens and grotto of stalactites, which, by the kindness of the family, one is permitted to visit, together with a small collection of antiquities brought together there. None of the churches—the Collegiata, just within the *castello*, S. Angelo the Pieve, S. Maria in Belvedere—has much to show us; but in S. Francesco, just outside the town, there are three Sienese pictures of some importance. Over the high altar there is a small picture of the Madonna by Sano di Pietro, and in the chapel of S. Egidio a Madonna and two Saints by Matteo Balducci, the pupil of Pacchiarotto and the imitator of Pintoricchio, while in the cloister there is a fresco of the Madonna enthroned by Benvenuto di Giovanni.

The road from Cetona to Chiusi is as pleasant as any in the world, descending first into the little valley of the Astrone, and then dividing into two ways, either of which will bring you at last to Chiusi, for the way to the right turns into the great valley, and you soon find yourself at Chiusi station, whence it is a walk of half an hour up into the city; the other crosses the hills by Poggio Montotto, and brings you out at last on the direct way from Sarteano, not a mile outside the city. It is this latter way I prefer, because it affords the better view; by it, it is, I suppose, six miles from Cetona to Chiusi.

Nothing, I suppose, can well be more venerable than Chiusi, and as for the beautiful view you see thence, men must have loved it for some thousands of years. To the right rises Monte Cetona, like a vast pyramid shining in the sun, while to the left Città della Pieve hides among the woods of its dear hills. Between, the valley opens north and south, the wide and fruitful valley of the Chiana, through a sweet and quiet world of villages and homesteads and sweetly breaking hills. How softly the evening falls there, and how wonderful is the light over hill and valley and mountain! It is easy to tell one is here on the verge of Umbria; one has but to go down into the valley, and in something less than a hundred yards one finds oneself in that mysterious country, "dim with

valleys," which Perugino, the landscape painter, has shown us in all his pictures. Well, Chiusi is, and has always been, the Mecca of the archæologist, yet I am sure he never found anything there half so lovely, half so consoling as that view over the valley and the light on the far hills. And whatever Chiusi may be or may come to be for the world, a vast Etruscan Necropolis or a huge factory town and railway terminus—God knows what they may make of her in the years to come—for me she will ever remain what she was to me in those two brief days in which I sat like a lord in the Leone d' Oro, and, like my fathers before me, washed my good goat's cheese down with Montepulciano and smoked *sigari* on the doorstep as I watched the evening procession of the maidens and the beautiful ladies, who there, as in every other Italian town and village, take their constitutional after the work of the day. Chiusi is merely the best and loveliest of places in Tuscany because you may look from it as from a window on Umbria. It is a place from which you may overlook grey olives and green vineyards and golden corn,and beyond a fairy lake, and beyond the hills and then the mountains. I could watch just that for ever. I did my best. They came to me and spoke of Etruscan tombs, they told me of an Etruscan Museum. They were right, there are Etruscan tombs at Chiusi—even Herr Baedeker says something of them—there is an Etruscan Museum—Herr Baedeker —ah, these Germans!—calls it interesting. But what have I to do with the Etruscans or the Etruscans with me? My world, the world I love, lies before my eyes. May I not look at it and enjoy it a little before it is taken away from me or spoiled for ever by some fool who wants to make money and benefit his country, as they say, by making it miserable and wretched?

By the Holy Thorn of Glastonbury—that, too, they almost destroyed—what are the Etruscans to me, or, I might ask, Signora the reader, to you either for that matter? What do you know about them? What is there to know? Can you read their language that you should be so eager for inscrip-

tions, or are you a body-snatcher or an antiquarian that you should make so much of a few tombs? All there is to know about Chiusi in the way of history, in the way of Etruscan history, can be put into half a dozen or so fine words—

"Lars Porsenna of Clusium,
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more."[1]

I have known that ever since I knew anything. Why all this pother about it now? This is the place—yes. Now let us return to the world, now that the evening . . .

If the ivory car of Lars Porsenna were in the Museum, or, better still, in his tomb, I would certainly go to see it. Perhaps you did not know that he had an ivory car? Oh, but he had, and he took it to Rome too. Doubtless it was utterly lost in the rout.

"Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsenna of Clusium
Sat in his ivory car."

Now the disastrous action of Lars Porsenna on behalf of Tarquinius Superbus, in the course of which false Sextus hoped to see brave Horatius drowned in the Tiber and was bitterly disappointed, is all the Etruscan history I know or ever want to know. All the rest is hearsay, and dull hearsay at that. I know nothing of the Etruscan League, save that it was composed of twelve cities. Get it out of Dennis or the guide-book.

I return to the evening in the valley. To the north-east one can see Cortona like some city of marble on the flank of those mysterious hills:

"Through corn and vines and flowers,
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
Her diadem of towers."

How absurd that is! It is always the same if one begins listening to any of this Etruscan speculation. It is pure

[1] *Cf.* also Æneid x, 167.

invention, and so is that. Macaulay must have written of Cortona as he wrote the "History of England," without any regard for the truth. It was not an age of documents, but one expected honesty. Now Macaulay can never have seen Cortona. Cortona never did and never shall lift to heaven "her diadem of towers." She lies on a hill-side with a vast background of mountains, that always and from every point of view seem to overwhelm and to threaten her. She crouches there like a white dove. Not that I mind Macaulay and his absurdities. The phrase is a good phrase—the lines are good lines—even now, when I have been in Cortona a hundred times, I have only to go away and to shut my eyes, and there she is, thank God, just as she used to be when I was a child, crowning the top of an incredible eyrie, and lifting to heaven "her diadem of towers." No, Macaulay is nothing to me—for I know that he is damned like all the Whigs—especially the Whig historians—damned past all hope of redemption. But while you reprobate Macaulay in the matter of Cortona, you expect me to discourse about Etruscan Clusium. I am not a Whig historian. I find invention exceedingly hard on my conscience, besides being difficult to do well; and though for no other cause, yet for this I refuse to write descriptions with appropriate dates and a good sprinkling of democratic sentiment, (α) of Etruscan history, (β) of the Etruscan tombs, (γ) of the works of art, whether Domestic or Religious, in the Etruscan Museum.

But mediæval Chiusi, if you would study that, if you would understand it, you must go to the Cathedral of S. Mustiola, the mother-church of the city, which not only commemorates a gracious saint but conserves, in so far as they have been conserved at all, the ancient memoirs of the Longobard rule here.

And first as to S. Mustiola. Chiusi, if all be true, must have been already of immense antiquity when the Roman lady Mustiola came during the Aurelian persecution in 275 to visit the Christian prisoners, as our Lord had ordained. Now the governor of Tuscany at that time was Tarcius, and he,

seeing the merciful lady by chance, and loving her, as he said, tried to win her to his bed; and when she would not for anything, he had her beaten to death with a leaden scourge. Her tomb, formed out of an ancient column, is still to be seen in her cathedral, and on her *festa*, 3 July, it is even yet a mass of flowers.

When such monsters as Tarcius were done with, let us hope for ever, by and by in God's good time the Goths thundered by Chiusi on their way to Rome; the place, in fact, became a sort of Gothic stronghold, and so fit and useful was it as a base against the Eternal City that even Totila—who, the Italians tell you, destroyed everything—refrained when he got Chiusi; indeed, the walls, so old that they were falling from age when the Longobards came, were never thrown down.

The Longobards established a Dukedom in Chiusi, as they did in Spoleto and Benevento, and we find a Duke established there in the eighth century, and that lasted till Charlemagne's day, disappearing for ever in 776. After that Chiusi was ruled by an *exercitale*, and then by a Count. During these and the following centuries Chiusi seems to have enjoyed considerable prosperity. Her true decadence seems to have begun in the eleventh century, when war and continual war at last brought famine and pestilence. Then her immediate *contado* and the valley of the Chiana became a pestilential swamp, that even till our fathers' time made the whole country unhealthy. Something of this we find expressed by Dante, who, considering that all must pass away, says :—

> "Se tu riguardi Luni ed Urbisaglia
> Come son ite, e come se ne vanno
> Di retro ad esse Chiusi e Sinigaglia.[1] . . ."

or as Longfellow has it :—

> "If Luni thou regard and Urbisaglia,
> How they have passed away and how are passing,
> Chiusi and Sinigaglia after them. . . ."

[1] "Paradiso," xvi.

No doubt the ruin was notorious, for Chiusi had been a city of great splendour with two cathedrals, the superior and perhaps the earlier being under the invocation of S. Secondiano, the other, of course, under that of S. Mustiola. Her *contado*, too, had been of very considerable extent. Thus what we now call Castiglione del Lago di Trasimeno was, before 1197, when it was taken and destroyed by the Aretines, known as Castiglione di Chiusi. Then in 1214 it seems that the Perugians were confirmed by Innocent III in jurisdiction over that part of her *contado* which was on their side of the Chiana, and which was thereafter called Chiusi di Perugia. And when in 1231 the Sienese gained their first victory in the *contado* of Orvieto it was Chiusi who suffered. In 1218 the Ghibellines of Arezzo, captained by Farinata degli Uberti, occupied the place after the defeat of Campaldino, but in the following year, as Villani[1] records, they of Chiusi were routed and the Guelf refugees restored.

It was in the year 1332 that the Perugians first took Chiusi, which shortly after was retaken by the Orvietans, who ruled there till 1337, when Chiusi regained her liberty. She remained free till 1355, when Charles IV established a vicar in the city. This rule in some sort lasted till 1380, when Siena began to rule there, which she more or less continued to do, though constantly deprived of the city, which was sold and resold all through the fifteenth century, till, indeed, in 1556 she opened her gates to Mario Sforza, Count of S. Fiora, and with the rest of Tuscany was gathered into the dominion of Cosimo I.

Very little remains in Chiusi, apart from the city herself and, for those who like them, the Etruscan remains, for the traveller to see. What there is will be found in the Duomo, a modernized building containing many fragments of older erections, the nave being upheld by eighteen ancient columns of various quality and size. In the *loggia* in the Piazza are many Etruscan and Roman inscriptions; but in the Cathedral itself are several fine pictures and a Missal which should on no

[1] "Cronica," vii, 136.

account be missed. In the left transept is a fine picture of the Nativity by Fungai, and in the sacristy a picture of the Madonna and Child with Saints by Baldassare Peruzzi. Here, too, is a beautiful illuminated Missal by Sano di Pietro.

This is really all there is to be had in the way of works of art in Chiusi, whose chief interest after all is in her Etruscan remains, in those vast cavernous tombs that honeycomb her hill-side, and in the small Museum full of vases, urns, *figurini*, and tear-bottles, which are constantly being found.

As you wander through the place, quiet enough at any time of year, through the great empty piazza at the top of the town from which there is so fine a view, past the beautiful red brick Church of S. Francesco, it is less of Chiusi than of the beautiful world in which she stands, scarcely more than an ancient graveyard, that you think. History here is but a tale that is told. The reality is not there but in the landscape, where to the west Cetona stands like some vast crater with Mont' Amiata looking over its shoulder; or where eastward lie the lakes like precious jewels, which only the passing clouds may trouble as they sail up from the sea to the great mountains of the Apennines, the hills of Umbria. Beside that marvellous and eternal beauty no trumpery tale of a dead civilization, of which we know nothing and can know nothing, is worth consideration for a moment. For here are the sun and the wind and the soft sky: let us lift up our hearts and rejoice in them, for too soon we also shall be of as little account as the Etruscans.

XXIV

CORTONA AND ST. MARGARET

THE easiest way to reach Cortona from Chiusi is, of course, by train, changing, if need be, at Terontola. By this route you pass quite along the western shore of Lago Trasimeno, past Castiglione del Lago in Umbria, coming into Tuscany again at Borghetto at the head of the lake. It is a journey full of beauty and delight, and may be done as well afoot as in the train. But for me that is not the way to Cortona, nor will it, in fact, reveal to you the true character of the country which lies between Chiusi and Cortona, the Val di Chiana with its great island of hills, the Poggi di Petrignano. In order to understand this strange and beautiful valley, so profoundly Umbrian in character, it is necessary to take the road, straight almost as a ruled line, across the narrow valley of the Tresa east of Chiusi so far as Strada, where it suddenly turns northward and winds slowly over the Poggi di Petrignano through Vaiano and Gioiella, through Pozzuolo, S. Margherita, Petrignano, Centoia, and Selva, where it descends into the Chiana and makes straight across the wide and fertile valley for that wonderful rock-bound citadel which is Cortona.

This road has many advantages for the traveller. It passes, for instance, close by Laviano, the birthplace (the house is still visible) of S. Margarita of Cortona, of whom I shall have something to say presently, and it affords a view of the whole country round about, thus revealing at once its character. Something certainly must be said of this valley, which was of

old a mere swamp, yet which the rival cities were so eager to dominate and to possess. Through it anciently in a multitude of little streams the river Chiana flowed, till it lost itself in the Paglia and so flowed into Tiber. Its condition during the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth century gradually grew worse; small lakes and vast swamps were formed by the ruin of the Etruscan and Roman system of drainage, which had rendered the river to some extent navigable probably as far as Chiusi, and the whole valley became a pestilential wilderness breathing malaria and death. Dante, indeed, speaks of it as a hospital in the summer-time,[1] and Fazio degli Uberti tells us :—

> " Quivi son volti pallidi e confusi
> Perchè l' aere e la Chiana è lor nimica
> Sicchè gli fanno idropici e rinfusi."

And Pulci in his " Morgante " uses its name to express fever-stricken and pestilential bogs. The district that had thus become a synonym for a dreary swamp is now one of the most fertile in Europe, and indeed not less healthy than the heights which surround it. This wonderful change, which took more than two centuries to effect, was achieved at last by filling up the swamp with "alluvial deposits" and by a great system of drainage whereby the Chiana, which originally flowed into the Tiber, was diverted into the Arno. The attempt had been planned by the Romans, who, according to Tacitus, only gave it up at the entreaty of the Florentines, who feared their lands would be flooded. It is to the Grand-Dukes of Tuscany we really owe the great undertaking which has turned a swamp that was a valuable hunting-ground, with a great hunting-lodge at Bettolle, into this fertile district of corn and wine and oil, where the great white oxen now draw the plough and the girls sing in the vineyards, and the good land yields a golden harvest. In these days when there are so few things left that have escaped the universal deluge of democratic barbarism, when even England seems in danger of falling into the hands

[1] *Cf.* " Inferno," xxix, 45, and see note 11, p. 333 *infra*.

CORTONA

of the mob, it is well to remind ourselves—and especially here in Italy, where too much is forgotten—that it was to the best and wisest rule that Tuscany has yet seen and not to modern Italy that she owes the riches of this valley and the happiness of its inhabitants. Let us hope that the modern kingdom may be able so far to follow its predecessors as to achieve in the Maremma what they accomplished here, and so for one good thing at least earn our gratitude and justify its existence.

That valley, so dreadful in the Middle Age, cannot, one might think, have been so in ancient times, or certainly the Romans would have dealt with it. Moreover, men do not as a rule choose a swamp to fight in, and it was here, in the valley under Cortona and along the northern side of the lake Piano Sanguinoso—from the blood that was spilt there—that Hannibal lured the Romans out of Arezzo to follow him, and there he took them in ambush, and after three hours of fighting utterly destroyed their army and killed their general, Flaminius. This on 21 June, B.C. 217.

It is, however, on something far more ancient and more venerable that we look when, having crossed the valley, we enter Camucia and stand at the foot of the great hills on whose flank Cortona lies.

In one of those grand old-fashioned periods in which Dennis was wont to address his readers in the more solemn moments of his exploration of Etruria, on the eve of entering some once famous city or before discovering to them some extraordinary marvel of his beloved Etruscan art, he introduces us to Cortona. "Traveller, thou art approaching Cortona! Dost thou reverence age—that fullness of years which, as Pliny says, 'in man is venerable, in cities sacred'? Here is that which demands thy reverence. Here is a city, compared to which Rome is but of yesterday—to which most other cities of ancient renown are fresh and green. Thou mayst have wandered far and wide through Italy—nothing hast thou seen more venerable than Cortona. Ere the days of Hector and Achilles, ere Troy itself arose—Cortona was. On that bare and lofty height whose towered crest holds communion with

the cloud, dwelt the heaven-born Dardanus, ere he left Italy to found the Trojan race; and on that mount reigned his father Corythus, and there he was laid in the tomb. Such is the ancient legend, and wherefore gainsay it? Away with doubts!—pay thy full tribute of homage—*acceptam parce movere fidem!* Hast thou respect to fallen greatness? Yon solemn city was once the proudest and mightiest in the land, the metropolis of Etruria and now—but enter its gates and look around."

Dear Dennis, companion of my boyhood, I have done thy bidding, and if I have forsaken what thou hast loved so eloquently for things that were hidden from thee—forgive me, master. It was thy hand led me thither, and in thy name I went. Also I did thy bidding. I "looked around," and it seemed to me that Corythus was nothing to me, but Frate Elias very much, and as for heaven-born Dardanus, what was he after all beside S. Margaret, Sister of the Seraphs, Lily of the Fields?

But before we can come either at heaven-born Dardanus or at S. Margaret it is necessary, as Dennis says, to come to Cortona, to enter its gates, and this is even to-day not so easy a business as one might suppose.

From the railway station you may drive by the road that climbs the hill-side to Cortona in half an hour, but if you be young enough and keen enough, you will go by the pathway among the boulders, over the stones, straight up the hill-side to the city, and by so doing realize what an unapproachable fortress Cortona is and on what tremendous ruins she is founded. But even when you have reached the Porta S. Domenico and found your inn, which to-day is good enough for any one, you have still to see Cortona, and that entails climbing everywhere, and especially a long climb to the upper town, for Cortona hangs, as it were, down the mountain-side from the star which is her *fortezza*.

Nothing, I think, in all Tuscany will impress and astonish the traveller more than his walks up and down Cortona through that maze of narrow precipitous streets between

the sombre palaces founded on the naked rock, and cliffs and boulders that a hundred generations have been powerless to wear away. Cortona is indeed, as Dennis says, the most ancient of cities, nor is there any city in Italy that has kept so mediæval an aspect.

You feel her ancientness at once when you come, even at Porta S. Domenico, within sight of her walls, for though they be Mediæval or Renaissance they are based on the most ancient of all, and often, as about Porta Colonia, they have proved so lasting that the Middle Age and the Renaissance have passed it by untouched, and we see it as it was three thousand years or more ago. Only at the highest part of the town the old wall has disappeared that the *fortezza* might there hold and be included in the city; yet it is just there, too, at Terra Pozza, outside the fortress, you come upon a huge fragment of the old wall again, 120 feet in length, composed of enormous blocks of sandstone held together by weight and without cement or mortar. Here is something as formidably old as anything at Volterra or Fiesole, something that the Umbri may have built before the Pelasgi took Cortona, to be deprived in their turn by the Etruscans.

It will thus be seen that Cortona has much to offer us, a wall of immense antiquity, streets narrow and precipitous, palaces and buildings of the Middle Age. Happily, too, she possesses many of those more human works which smile at us from the early Renaissance.

Just without the Porta S. Domenico, in the delightful piazza there, stands a church under the protection of that Saint, a building of the fifteenth century, and within, over the altar on the right, is a Madonna and Saints with the Bishop Serninio, for whom it was painted in 1515 by the great man Cortona bred for Italy—Luca Signorelli. It is one of his last pictures, now, unhappily, in very bad condition. The Madonna, in a beautiful red robe and green mantle, is enthroned with her little Son, her feet resting on the heads of Cherubim, an Angel on either side, while below stand S. Domenico and S. Peter Martyr.

The work of Signorelli's pupil, Bartolommeo della Gatta, stands over the high altar of this church, an Assumption of the Virgin—with two kneeling Saints by some lesser hand. But Cortona, which gave birth to Luca Signorelli, was the refuge not only of the Frate Elias and of S. Margaret, but of a painter too, and one of the greatest—Fra Angelico. He came here in 1407, when schism proclaimed Alexander V Pope, and the friars of S. Domenico of Fiesole, rather than acknowledge this antipope, fled away, some to Foligno and some to Cortona. Among them was a novice, Fra Giovanni, whom we call for love Fra Angelico.

And here in S. Domenico of Cortona, as it happens, he painted several glorious works, two of which, happily still remaining to us, are now preserved in the church of the Gesù here in Cortona, and one of them is certainly among the loveliest of his paintings. Of all he did at S. Domenico, in the church that remains, in the convent where he passed his novitiate,[1] which has been destroyed, only one is left there for us, the lunette over the doorway, a half-ruined fresco of the Madonna and Child with Saints.

From S. Domenico, within the gate the Via Nazionale leads straight to the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele before the Palazzo del Municipio. Thence the Via Guelfa runs to the left past a magnificent palace of the sixteenth century to the church of S. Agostino, where there is an altarpiece of the Madonna and Child with Saints by Pietro da Cortona, a native painter of no very great talent. Turning to the right from the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele we soon come to the Piazza Signorelli and the fine Palazzo Pretorio with its little Museum of Etruscan antiquities—urns, vases, inscriptions, and so forth. Thence the Via Casali descends to the Duomo of S. Mary.

Built by Giulio da Sangallo, as it is said, in the end of the

[1] Mr. Langton Douglas has discovered that S. Antonino with certain of the younger friars went from Fiesole, not to Foligno, as has been supposed, but to Cortona, and it seems probable that Fra Angelico was among these younger brethren. See L. Douglas, "Fra Angelico" (Bell, 1900), pp. 27, 28.

fifteenth century, the Duomo was unhappily altered in the eighteenth century, and has lost much of its beauty. It contains, however, four works by Signorelli, all unhappily late works and none of them in very good preservation, as well as a fine altarpiece of the Madonna and Angels by Pietro Lorenzetti. Signorelli's works are all in the choir; they consist of a Deposition with *predella*, painted in 1502; the Communion of the Apostles, painted in 1512; and two pictures which are his only in part, an Immaculate Conception and an Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. The most important of these works is the first; it was not painted for the Duomo, however, but for S. Margarita. The fame of this picture, and it was very famous, owes everything to Vasari, who, noting the realism of the dead Christ, spread the legend he had heard that Signorelli painted it from the dead body of his own son. However this may be, and Vasari as a little lad once met Signorelli, who was his kinsman, we know that when the great painter lost his son he would not part with him until he had made a drawing of the young body, pathetic and beautiful, so that he might remind himself every day of a thing so frail which he had found so precious.

Opposite the Duomo is the Church of Il Gesù, the baptistery built in 1505, and here, in fact, are preserved the great treasures of Cortona.

The finest of these is the exquisite Annunciation from S. Domenico, where under a delicate *loggia* just without the house at sunset in the cool of the day Madonna has been reading, when suddenly over the flowers Gabriel has come to her with his *Ave Gratia Plena*, and she has crossed her white hands on her bosom, and, the book still open on her knee, has leaned a little breathlessly forward as though to escape. And indeed as the angel has said, the Lord is with her, the Dove hovers sweetly over her bright head, and God the Father Himself overhears His own message passing down under the arches. In the background, as though to show us quite clearly what is happening, we see as in a vision our first parents expelled from Paradise, that Eden to which Mary is

about to win for us admission again. The *predella* shows us scenes from the Virgin's life, and one scene, probably a substitution, of the life of S. Dominic.

The other work by Fra Angelico here also comes from S. Domenico. It is a triptych of the Madonna enthroned with her Divine Son between S. John Baptist, a magnificent figure, S. John Evangelist, S. Mary Magdalen, and S. Mark. Four guardian angels stand behind with tributes of flowers. In the pinnacles are our Lord crucified, the Blessed Virgin and S. John grieving, and in the *tondi* at the base is the Annunciation. In the *predella* are scenes from the life of S. Dominic.

Beside these two magnificent works hangs a picture of the Madonna and four Saints by Signorelli, a late and not very charming picture. Close by, however, is something more delightful, a polyptych by Sassetta, in which we see the Madonna and Child enthroned with the attendant angels in the midst, and on one side S. Nicholas of Bari and S. Michael, and on the other S. John Baptist and S. Margaret. Above in two *tondi* is the Annunciation. This is not perhaps one of Sassetta's greatest or most charming works, but the S. Michael is very stately, and the beauty and unction of the S. Margaret cannot be denied.

From the Baptistery we make our way by Via Dardano to the Porta Colonia, where the view northward and east is fierce, desolate, and terrible, and where the Etruscan wall still guards the city. Then returning through the city to Piazza Vittorio Emanuele we set out for the *fortezza*, taking the churches of S. Niccolò and S. Margarita on our way.

The Church of S. Niccolò contains two beautiful things, a double altarpiece of the Madonna and Child with Saints, with a dead Christ upheld by Angels, on the reverse, by Signorelli, and a ruined fresco of a Madonna and Saints on the left wall by the same painter. The altarpiece is of a rare beauty and originality, an important painting of the master's. The dead Christ half lies on the tomb, upheld by an Archangel, while three others stand by in grief. Before

Fra Angelico *Gesù, Cortona*

ANNUNCIATION

Him kneel S. Jerome, and on the other side S. Francis and three other Saints. Nothing could be finer and more original than this picture. The four archangels are very noble figures, and have much in common with Signorelli's work at Orvieto, while the S. Jerome is splendidly dramatic. The only figure that is disappointing is the dead Christ, which somehow in its over-expressive realism fails both in beauty and effect, and if we contrast it for a moment, as we cannot fail to do, with the divine and pitiful figure of the great archangel who so tenderly supports it, we are convinced at once of its failure. The Madonna and Saints on the reverse is not less fine. There we see our Lady enthroned with her little Son about to bless us between S. Peter and S. Paul.

From S. Niccolò it is still a long climb by a way cut out of the rock up to S. Margarita, but no one, I think, can afford to miss going there, for though the church be modern the view thence is magnificent, and then it is there we shall find the shrine of S. Margaret, surely one of the holiest places in Tuscany, the tomb of one of the most human of Saints, a true daughter of S. Francis. And after visiting that grave and gazing half in dread, half in tears on the "still incorrupt" body of one who was so beautiful that, as her history tells us, she was called Lily of the Valleys, we continue on our way up to the *fortezza*, where all the world seems to lie at our feet, where Cetona and Mont' Amiata guard the western horizon and the great valley of the Chiana stretches out for ever, dotted with villages and pleasant with vineyards and corn.

Somewhere among those island hills that lie in the great plain between us and Montepulciano, at the little village of Laviano, S. Margaret was born in the year 1247.[1] Her father was a husbandman, and of her mother we only know that she died when Margaret was but seven years old. Indeed, all that the child seems able to remember of her mother was her

[1] An excellent Life of S. Margaret of Cortona, together with a translation of the essential parts of her legend, has been published by Father Cuthbert, O.F.C., under title "A Tuscan Penitent" (Burns and Oates).

lovely humility, so that she would pray to our Lord Christ, "O Lord Jesu, I pray Thee for the safety of all for whom Thou wouldst have me to pray."

Margaret's misfortunes began when she was but nine years old, for then her father took a new wife who neither loved her nor gave her any care, but indeed seems to have treated her with indifference, if not with harshness. Now for Margaret one thing was necessary above any other—to be loved. We can picture her miserable childhood, an alien in her father's house, unwanted, and even looked on with jealousy, for as she grew older her beauty astonished all who looked on her. Then when she was about seventeen a marvellous thing, as it must have seemed to her, befell her. Till now her road had been hard and bitter enough, not to be sweetened with tears; suddenly the world was full of flowers. She was beloved. That she should give her love in return was just a matter of course. The suitor who came thus like a ray of spring sunshine into her life was a young knight from Montepulciano. She never told his name; maybe even in the light of what happened later it seemed too precious to tell to any one but God, for that she gave him her whole heart we may be sure. This youth, then, came to court her, probably secretly, and continually unsatisfied, besought her presently to flee from her unhappiness to his happiness, to go with him to his home in the city, promising her love, admiration, joy, and the whole world if she would come. He also promised her marriage.

So little Margaret, white as the lilies by whose name she is called, doubting nothing possibly and certainly loving all, crept out of her father's house in the night and fled away across the dreary marshes, nearly drowned with her lover on the way, for the Chiana was in flood, till they came to the great hill country and the pleasant, smiling, seductive city of Montepulciano. And there with much joy she lived with him she loved for nine years: only he forgot to marry her. No doubt he was too busy with her in his arms; for we read that he gave her all her heart's desire, denying her only this one

thing, that he should call her wife. Among other things he gave her was a little son. Then Margaret seems to have been ashamed: yet only in her heart, for she was used to unhappiness, and that happiness so great as that she had should be complete may well have seemed impossible. Her neighbours found her as lovely as ever, as gay, as witty, and as full of the desire of joy. One of them seems to have hinted to her one day that she should look to her soul; but she answered gaily and with spirit that one should have no fear for her, for she would yet be among the Saints, and the whole world should come a pilgrim to her shrine, with staff and scrip and leathern bottle. Yet this sweet lady, so cruelly and so sweetly wronged, ever compassioned the poor, was pitiful of the needy and friends with the outcast, and, like the flowers that cannot be smutched, she gladdened the eyes of all who beheld her. Nor do I believe her heart was very sorrowful. She loved, she was beloved. Was not that enough?

So she lived, so she met life, so she communed with her heart and went merrily, a new kiss every morning on her mouth. Till one summer evening, as she sat singing at the window awaiting her man's return, his hound came home without him and would do nothing but whine and run to and fro between her and the doorway. Then, suddenly cold at the heart, she followed him. And the brute led her to a lonely place not far from the road where was a wood, and there lay he who was her all—mangled and dead.

When she had kissed him and said many prayers for his soul, accusing herself and her beauty for his sin, she returned home with them who bore the body to her house. From that moment she was a changed woman. Her heart was broken, and all that had once been so precious seemed now nothing worth, since she had lost the best of all. Her actions and whole attitude towards life at this time prove her great love. She accused herself, her beauty, her love to save her lover. She judged herself more harshly than even our prudish piety is able to do, and from that moment she determined to expiate

her lover's sin and her own by a life wholly devoted to God. She resolved on bitter austerities, on humiliations past belief, on absolute poverty and semi-starvation. First of all she returned to her lover's family all he had given her, save some trinkets that were too precious to be given to any but the poor; these she distributed among such as were in distress, for they were her brethren and sisters. Then she resolved to go back to her father's house and to suffer all things with joy. With scarce enough to clothe her, she set out with her little son, and when she came to the door she knocked for admittance timidly, like a beggar, and indeed without hope. Yet her father would have received her gladly, but he could not answer for his wife: the married woman turned her out, drove her from the house. Now here is a marvel which we surely must somehow solve. Margaret was a sinner doubtless, yet she was a sister of the poor who are Christ's brethren; her stepmother was wedded, an honest woman, a frequenter of churches, friendly to priests, yet she turned the sister of her Lord from the door of her own home, and refused her shelter and food, of which she was in need, and this though she led a child by the hand. Solve it how you may, you that have driven her out of her land. But for me I would rather toil for a thousand years and a thousand up the steepest rocks of Purgatory with Margaret, yea, I would rather burn with her in the whitest fire, than sit in the prim alleys of Paradise with such a beast as this stepmother and with them who made her what she was, and still persist.

Something of the tragedy of this time in Margaret's life has found its way into the legend which from her own lips Fra Giunta took down, and which Father Cuthbert has translated so beautifully. For when she was in despair and there was no one to protect her, then He who, whether we will or no, is always near us, waiting till we need Him, came—ah! as she was to learn, the best, true lover of all—to take her into His keeping. He reminds her of this later, when she might hear His voice:—

Remember, *poverella*, how, thy tempter being dead, thou

didst return to thy father at Laviano, with thy whole being filled with sorrow, with thy tears and drawn face, clothed in a black robe and utterly ashamed. And thy father, lacking fatherly pity and urged on by thy stepmother, did drive thee from his home. Not knowing what to do, and being without any adviser or helper, thou didst sit down weeping under a fig-tree in his garden, and there thou didst seek in Me a Guide, a Father, a Spouse and Lord; and with a humble heart didst confess thine utter misery of soul and body. Then lo! the serpent of old, seeing thee cast out by thy father, sought to his own shame and thy destruction to make thy comeliness and youth an inducement to presume upon My mercy; putting it into thy heart that since thou wast now cast out thou mightest excusably go on in sin, and that wheresoever thou shouldst come or go thou wouldst not lack lovers amongst the great ones of the world because of thine exceeding beauty."

That horror was spared her. For as she had called on our Lord in her trouble, He heard her; He delivered her out of her distress, bidding her rise up from under the fig-tree and go to the Friars of S. Francis in Cortona, and they would know what she was to do. Indeed, to whom else, I should like to know, could she have so properly appealed as to the little son of the dear, great Saint of Umbria—S. Francesco of Assisi?

Margaret, hearing that voice, did as she was bidden, and coming to Cortona, asked of two ladies whom she met the way to S. Francesco, but they—their names were Marinaria and Raneria, beautiful names, let them be remembered for ever—seeing her condition, took her and her little son home, and when they were comforted introduced her to the Friars, who gave her pity, love, kindness, and good counsel. Thus was begun the work of purification, of expiation, which endured during the rest of her life.

Margaret came to Cortona in 1273,[1] and she never left the city again but once, and that was to go to Montepulciano

[1] On this see Father Cuthbert, *op. cit.*, *supra*, p. 15.

publicly to proclaim her sin before the city in the Duomo. This Fra Giunta reluctantly gave her leave to do, and truly in order to save her from a worse humiliation which she would have inflicted on herself: for she desired to go thither naked, with a rope round her neck, led by a hired woman proclaiming her sin through the streets.

In Cortona she earned her bread by nursing the sick, and presently leaving the house of Marinaria and Raneria, which seemed too cosy, she went to live in a little cottage in a lonelier place. There she began to live wholly upon alms, begging her bread day by day, refusing money, and only accepting the refuse from the tables of those who themselves can have been scarcely other than poor. They refused to see in her a mere beggar, and gave her, in a spirit we have utterly lost, more than the refuse, but this she gave to the poor, and took for herself and her son only what remained over. Thus, though she was hard on her own child,[1] as the result of her sin perhaps, she was called the "mother of the poor."

Thus three years passed away. But though Margaret's whole life had suffered a revolution, a purification if you will, fundamentally she was the same nature. She had always longed for love, for the outward manifestation of it, and in her new love of Christ, which had come to her "in that passionate way of hers," she desired it also by way of assurance. And it was in that Voice which had spoken with her in the garden under the fig-tree that she found this, while to prove her sincerity to all she entered the Third Order of St. Francis. Yet it was the Voice that she lived to hear. "My child," It would say, and "*Poverella*"—poor little one. And so began a wonderful interior and mystical life in which Christ held familiar conversation with her and discovered to her many wonderful mysteries. This is not, I think, the

[1] Father Cuthbert tells us that "she told the boy on one occasion that in serving the poor she knew she was serving Christ, because she was moved by the spirit, whereas in serving him she was not sure but what she was obeying the impulse of the flesh." The lad became a Frate, and appears to have died a martyr's death.

place to discuss the mystical experiences of Margaret. It will suffice to refer the reader to the beautiful legend written by Fra Giunta, her "unworthy staff," which Father Cuthbert has translated with so much sympathy. We return to her life of action. For if as a contemplative and ecstatic she was great, she was by no means a mere recluse. That tending of the sick presently organized itself, her cottage became a hospital, and out of it grew the great Spedale of Cortona, the Spedale di S. Maria della Misericordia, opened in 1286. The Sisters who served it were all, like Margaret, Franciscan Tertiaries, and the people of Cortona, remembering S. Francis, called them *le poverelle*.

But even this organization had not exhausted all Margaret's power for good. She was the great peacemaker of Tuscany at that period. Already in 1277 she had fearlessly warned the warlike Bishop of Arezzo, Guglielmo Ubertini Pazzi, to amend his ways and cease from strife, and two years later, in 1279, by her prayers she saved the Cortonesi from invasion. Again, in 1289, she warned Bishop Guglielmo, but this time he would not hear her, and two days later he fell in battle.

Yet for all her influence in the great things of this world, it was as a comforter, as the mother of her people, as a nurse, that she was most beloved. "If a child were sick," says Father Cuthbert, "the parents would come to Margaret that she might lay her hands upon it and bring back health. Those who were strongly tempted to sin would come laying bare their temptation, and seeking in her prayers and words of counsel the moral strength they lacked. If a mother despaired of a son's salvation because of his evil life, she came begging Margaret to send him some bread from her table, believing that if the son but tasted bread sanctified by Margaret's presence he would be converted. . . . It was useless for Margaret to plead that she was a sinner like themselves, and that because of her sins her very touch would soil them. The people disbelieved her protestations and believed the more in the efficacy of her intervention."

Yet even she did not escape scandal. Evildoers cast sus-

picion upon her relations with Fra Giunta, her confessor, and for this cause, much to the regret of the Friar, who looked to have her body after death, she removed from her house near S. Francesco to the spot under the *fortezza* where now her church stands, but which was then occupied by the ruined and deserted Church of S. Basilio. Fra Giunta at the time of the scandal, in which the Friars were not blameless, had been sent away to Siena. It was, however, in his arms that, seven years later, Margaret came to die on 22 February, 1297; and immediately all Cortona proclaimed her a Saint, but she was not formally canonized till May, 1728.

It is strange that Cortona should have held almost at that same time two such different Franciscans as Frate Elias [1] and S. Margaret—the one a great statesman who abhorred poverty, the other a poor woman who loved it. Elias built here in the city a vast palace full of every sort of splendour that later became the Vescovado, Margarita built the hospital and restored the church which, after being rebuilt, was to bear her name. And it is she who is the victor, not he, for all his power and wealth and greatness of mind. He is forgotten by all men save a few historians, while her name is still familiarly dear on the lips of peasants and children, who invoke her, their all-powerful friend, as we may hear any day in the fields or the byways about her home:—

"O Lily of our fields,
O Violet of humility,
O little Sister of the Seraphs,
Ora pro nobis."

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[1] For a full account of Frate Elias see my "Cities of Umbria" (Methuen, 3rd edition, 1908), p. 321, *et seq.*

XXV

AREZZO AND BORGO SAN SEPOLCRO

IT was early morning when I crept out of Cortona by Porta S. Agostino down the precipitous way into the valley for Castiglione Fiorentino and Arezzo. At Il Sodo I found the highroad, and by then the sun was over the hills, and I went with a will swinging up the valley northward till I came to Montecchio, a stronghold of the Tarlati, and there I breakfasted among the vines. Then I went on again till just before midday I found myself under Castiglione Fiorentino, the strongest place on this side of the Chiana Valley, an outpost of Arezzo, and, while that city held the hills behind it, impregnable. It has no history of its own, but it is very well worth a visit, for the country about it is noble and picturesque, and the town itself, built about its hill-top, is even more completely mediæval than Cortona, whose decadence, according to the chroniclers, gave birth to Castiglione, which has generally been held by the Aretines or by their masters, the Florentines.

Nor is Castiglione Fiorentino without attractions in the way of pictures. In the Collegiata over the third altar on the right is a Madonna and Child with Saints and donor, painted in 1486 by Bartolommeo della Gatta. This altarpiece of some splendour originally had a *predella*, which is now preserved in the sacristy. It represents scenes from the Legend of S. Giuliano. Over the altar, on the right of the high altar, is a late work by Lorenzo di Credi, a Nativity, which is not without charm.

We come upon the work of Bartolommeo della Gatta again

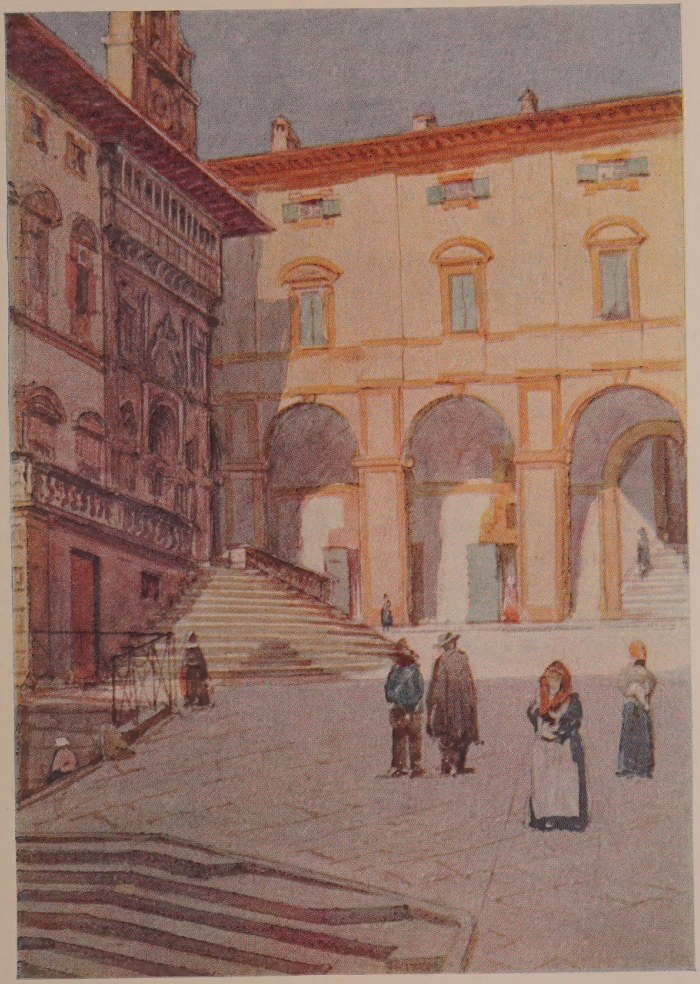
in S. Francesco, in the right transept there, where is a fine picture painted in 1487 of S. Francesco receiving the Stigmata. But most of the churches in and about Castiglione Fiorentino have been robbed of their pictures, which are now gathered into the Pinacoteca in the Palazzo del Municipio. There we may see what riches they once possessed in the work of Signorelli, Bartolommeo della Gatta, Giovanni di Paolo, and Sellajo.

By Signorelli is a fresco of the Deposition (11), from the Collegiata, where it once made beautiful the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. It is a very splendid piece of work, though it may not compare, of course, with the Cortona masterpiece. Don Bartolommeo, his pupil, is finely represented here by a picture, also from the Collegiata, in which a woman of noble family kneels with a child in her arms before the Archangel Michael, who is a-trampling on the devil (13). Grotesque and affected as the Saint appears, he still reminds us of Signorelli, but the head of the noble lady is surely Peruginesque. A scutcheon at her feet bears the arms of the Visconti, and it is said that the lady is Teodora Visconti. A scroll assures us that "*Laurentia fieri fecit.*"

As for Giovanni di Paolo the Sienese, the close follower of Sassetta, he is to be seen here almost at his best in two panels of the Marriage of S. Catherine (34). These, too, come from the Collegiata. We see the Virgin and Child enthroned, while beside them stand S. Catherine, a figure recalling the work of Gentile da Fabriano, another female Saint, and S. Michael, the last a much injured figure. On the panel of the Virgin and Child we read "Opus Johannis de Senis A.D. MLCCCLVII."

Sellajo, the pupil of Fra Filippo Lippi, is seen here in a curious picture called the Pool of Bethesda (14).

I left Castiglione Fiorentino again at dawn, and as I went on my way, when the light grew stronger I saw that the character of the landscape had changed. Instead of the country of wild hills and deep valleys, of rocks and bare mountain-side, so Umbrian in character, that surrounds Cortona, I found myself in a land of green, rolling meadows,



AREZZO : PIAZZA VASARI

of low, fertile hills full of contentment, almost English in its placidity. And all that day it was the same. I had come nto a new land—the land of the Aretines, as I found when at dusk I entered Arezzo.

The environment of a city, like the environment of a person, lends that which it has after all produced something of its own qualities. Rome, Florence, Siena, Assisi are what they are because of the nature of the country in which they lie. It is the same with Arezzo. Her incommunicable allure strikes you at once as soon as you enter her gates—a certain smiling aspect, subtle and discreet and yet very charming and simple seeming in its welcome, its pleasantness and serenity. Yet nothing, I think, in the history of Arezzo, of what we know of the history of Arezzo—for it is more obscure than that of any other Commune of the same importance—would lead you to expect an aspect so happy, so merely delightful. Nothing in her history! But I am wrong, for it was here both Mæcenas and Petrarch were born. It would be impossible to doubt it even though we had no irrefutable proof of the fact, and indeed I think no men have better expressed their birthplace unless—well, unless it be Vasari, who was also an Aretine. These three men perfectly explain Arezzo; its orderliness, its delight, its extraordinary charm, its profound disregard of anything that matters, of anything but a certain *décor* and endless gossip.

Books tell you that Arezzo was an Etruscan city, one of the greater in the Confederation, but of her adventures and her policy at that too remote period we know nothing or very little. Her career under the dominion of Rome is most interesting, and it helps us to appreciate her age to learn that she was disloyal during the Punic War, but that towards its close she furnished her share of supplies, even weapons and such, to Scipio Africanus and his fleet. In the great civil war she sided with Marius, and when he fell Cicero pleaded her cause. Catiline seems to have had some attraction for her, and in Cæsar's wars against Pompey she was one of the first cities occupied by the former.

These facts alone would lead us to the conclusion that

Arezzo was an important town and a place of some strength. And a glance at a map confirms us in this. She stands at the junction of three great valleys and at the gates of the pass which leads from the Val d' Arno to the Val di Tevere. The three valleys to which she holds the key—the Val d' Arno, the Casentino, and the wide Val di Chiana—are the roads to Florence, Pisa, and the sea, to the Romagna and the Adriatic, to Rome, the States of the Church, and Southern Tuscany. This important position might, it would seem, have created a great State. In fact, it ruined a little one. Arezzo was never in all her long history great or strong enough for the post she held. Instead of dominating the Val d' Arno, she was always at the mercy of Florence; instead of holding the road to Rome she was often overcome by Perugia and Chiusi and Orvieto; instead of holding the gates of Tuscany against the Barbarians from the Romagna, she was often at their feet. Rich in the production of personalities, of great men of action, or of the arts, she was never able to form a Commune of any permanence, but was always at the mercy of one of her own children, finding peace and stability only under a foreign domination.

In the thirteenth century she was under the domination of the Conti Guidi and of the great Bishops of the Pazzi Ubertini, and later of the Tarlati clans. All these chieftains were warlike robbers, bent rather on spoil than on the consolidation of a State, more eager for war than for peace. They were thus the natural enemies of the young Commune of Florence, which was chiefly bent on commerce. It was therefore right and necessary for Florence to crush Arezzo, nor was she slow in setting about it. The geographical position of Arezzo was too formidable to admit of delay; she held too many of the exits and entrances of Tuscany, and was able to inflict too many and too easy outrages upon the caravans of Florence. It is in the most characteristic and in many ways the most important battle of the Middle Age in Central Italy—the battle of Campaldino—that Arezzo, Ghibelline since 1262, was for the first time brought low and taken by the Florentines, who were presently to bring her altogether

within their dominion. In the Florentine account we have one of the most minute descriptions of a mediæval battle anywhere to be found. I therefore give it almost verbatim.

In 1289, in the month of May, we find, in Villani's words, "a host straightway gathered against the city of Arezzo by reason of outrages received from the Aretines, and the banners of war, on behalf of Florence, were given out on the 13th day of May, and the Royal [Naples] Standard was borne by M. Gherardo Ventraia de' Tornaquinici, and so soon as they were given to them they bore them to the abbey of Ripoli, as was their wont, and there they left them under guard, making as though they would march by that road upon the city of Arezzo. And all the allies being come, and the host being ordered by secret counsel, they purposed to depart by the way of the Casentino, and suddenly, the 2nd day of June, the bells sounding a tolling, the ever prosperous host of the Florentines set forth, and they bore the banners which were at Ripoli across the Arno and held the way of Pontassieve, and encamped to await the gathering of forces on Monte al Pruno; and there were assembled 1,600 horse and 10,000 foot, whereof 600 were citizens with their horses, the best armed and mounted which ever sallied forth from Florence; and 400 mercenaries, together with the following of the Captain M. Amerigo, in the pay of the Florentines; and of Lucca there were 150 horsemen; and of Prato 40 horsemen and foot-soldiers; of Pistoia 60 horse and foot; and of Siena 120 horse; and of Volterra 40 horse; and of Bologna their ambassadors with their company, and of Samminiato, and of Sangimignano, and of Colle, men mounted and on foot from each place; and Maghinardo of Susinana, a good and wise captain in war with his Romagnoli. And the said host being assembled they descended into the plain of Casentino, devastating the places of Count Guido Novello, who was Podestà of Arezzo. Hearing this, the Bishop of Arezzo, with the other captains of the Ghibelline party (for there were many men of name amongst them) determined to come with all their host to

Bibbiena, to the end it might not be destroyed; and they were 800 horse and 8,000 foot, very fine men; and many wise captains of war were among them, for they were the flower of the Ghibellines of Tuscany, of the March, and of the Duchy and of Romagna; and all were men experienced in arms and in war; and they desired to give battle to the Florentines, having no fear; albeit the Florentines were two horsemen to one against them; but they despised them, saying that they adorned themselves like women and combed their tresses; and they derided them and held them for naught. Truly, there was further cause why the Aretines should declare battle against the Florentines, albeit their horsemen were two to one against them; for they were in fear of a plot which the Bishop of Arezzo had set on foot with the Florentines, and conducted by M. Marsilio de' Vechietti, to give over to the Florentines Bibbiena, Civitella, and all the castles of his See, and he to have 5,000 golden florins each year of his life, in the security of the company of the Cerchi. The progress of this plot was interrupted by M. Guglielmino Pazzo, his nephew, to the end the Bishop might not be slain by the Ghibelline leaders; and therefore they hastened the battle and took thither the said Bishop, where he was left dead, together with the rest; and thus was the Bishop punished for his treason, who at the same time sought to betray both the Florentines and his own Aretines. And the Florentines, having joyfully received the gage of battle, arrayed themselves; and the two hosts stood over against one another, after more ordered fashion both on one side and on the other than ever in any battle before in Italy, in the plains at the foot of Poppi, in the region of Certomondo, for such is the name of the place, and of a church of the Franciscans which is near there, and in a plain which is called Campaldino; and this was a Saturday morning, the 11th day of June, the day of S. Barnabas the Apostle. M. Amerigo and the other Florentine captains drew up in well-ordered troops, and enrolled 150 forefighters of the best of

the host, among which were twenty new-made knights, who then received their spurs; and M. Vieri de' Cerchi being among the captains, and being lame in the leg, would not therefore desist from being among the forefighters; and since it fell to him to make the selection for his *sesto*, he would not lay this service upon any who did not desire to be chosen, but chose himself and his son and nephews; the which thing was counted to him as of great merit; and for his good example and for shame many other noble citizens offered themselves as forefighters. And this done they flanked them on either side by troops of light-armed infantry, and crossbowmen and unmounted lancers. Then behind the forefighters came the main body, flanked in its turn by footmen, and behind all the baggage, so collected as to close up the rear of the main body, outside of which were stationed 200 horse and foot of the Lucchesi and Pistoians and other foreigners, whereof was Captain M. Corso Donati, which then was Podestà of Pistoia; and their orders were to take the enemy in flank should occasion rise. The Aretines on their part ordered their troops wisely, inasmuch as there were, as we have said, good captains of war amongst them, and they appointed many forefighters, to the number of 300, among which were chosen twelve of the chief leaders, who were called The Twelve Paladins; and each side having given a war-cry to their host, the Florentines "Ho, Knights, Nerbona," and the Aretines "Ho, Knights, San Donato!" the forefighters of the Aretines advanced with great courage, and struck spur to smite into the Florentine host; and the rest of their troop followed after, save that Count Guido Novello, which was with a troop of 150 horse, to charge in flank, did not adventure himself into the battle, but drew back, and then fled to his castle; and the movement and assault made upon the Florentines by the Aretines, who esteemed themselves to be valiant men-at-arms, was to the end that by their bold attack they might break up the Florentines at the first onset and put them to flight; and the shock was so great that most of the Florentine forefighters were unhorsed, and the main

body was driven backward a good space, but they were not therefore confounded nor broken up, but received the enemy with constancy and fortitude; and the wings of infantry on either side, keeping their ranks well, enclosed the enemy, and there was hard fighting for a good space. And M. Corso Donati, who was apart with the men of Lucca and Pistoia, and had been commanded to stand firm and not to strike under pain of death, when he saw the battle begun, said, like a valiant man: 'If we lose, I will die in the battle with my fellow-citizens; and if we conquer let him that will come to us at Pistoia to exact the penalty;' and he boldly set his troop in motion and struck the enemy in the flank, and was a great cause of their rout. And this done, as it pleased God, the Florentines had the victory, and the Aretines were routed and discomfited, and between horse and foot more than 1,700 were slain, and more than 2,000 taken, whereof many of the best were smuggled away, some for friendship, some in return for ransom; but there came bound to Florence more than 740 . . . and there was great gladness and rejoicing in Florence, with good cause, for at the said discomfiture were slain many captains and valiant men of the Ghibelline party and enemies of the Commonwealth of Florence, and there were brought low the arrogance and pride, not only of the Aretines, but of the whole Ghibelline party and of the Empire."

Thus was won the famous battle of Campaldino; but Florence was by no means done with her Ghibelline enemies. Like all States whose power was in commerce, she was loath to fight, but being in it she was quite ruthless.

"After the said victory," says Villani, "the trumpets were sounded for the return from the pursuit and the Florentine host was marshalled upon the field; and this done they departed to Bibbiena and took it without resistance; and having plundered and despoiled it of all its wealth and much booty they caused the walls and the fortified houses to be destroyed to the foundations, and many other villages round about, and they abode there eight days. Whereas if on the day following

the Florentine host had ridden upon Arezzo without doubt they would have taken the city; but during that sojourn they that had escaped from the battle returned thither, and the peasants round about took refuge there, and order was taken for the defence and guard of the city. The host of the Florentines came thither after some days and laid siege to the city, continually laying waste the region round about, and taking their fortresses so that they gained them nearly all, some by force and some on conditions; and the Florentines caused many to be destroyed, but they kept possession of Castiglione of Arezzo and Montecchio and Rondine and Civitella and Laterina and Montesansavino. And with the host there went two of the Priors of Florence as inspectors; and the Sienese came in a body with much force of horse and foot, after the defeat, to regain their lands taken by the Aretines, and they took Lucignano of Arezzo and Chiusura of Valdichiana on conditions. And the said Florentine host being at Arezzo in the old palace of the Bishops for twenty days, they laid waste all round about them, and they ran their races there on the feast of S. Giovanni and erected there many engines and hurled into the city asses with mitres on their heads in contempt and reproach of their Bishop, and raised many wooden towers and other works to attack the city; and a fierce battle ensuing a great part of the palisade (for there was not then any other wall in that part) was burnt and laid low; and if the captains of the host had made the besiegers fight lustily they would have taken the city by storm; but when they should have fought they caused the retreat to be sounded, wherefore they were held in abomination forasmuch as this was done through greed of gain; for the which cause the people and the combatants, losing heart, were slack in skirmishing and on guard; wherefore the night following they of Arezzo issued forth and set fire to many wooden towers and burnt them, with many other works, and this done the Florentines lost hope of taking the city by battle, and the better part of the host departed, leaving the aforesaid strongholds guarded to the end they might continually harry the city; and the host returned to

Florence on the 23rd day of July with great rejoicing and triumph."

Thus failed the first attempt of the Florentines to take Arezzo. They paid dear enough for it. Bishop Guglielmo was to come, and after him Bishop Guido Tarlati. These were great prelates and men of war after the fashion of the time, very powerful lords and feudatories of the Empire.

The first thing we hear of Bishop Guido is that in the year of Corso Donati's death the Aretines sent him into exile with his friends, the Guelfs returned, and there was peace with Florence. But the star of the Empire was not yet set. Henry VII entered Italy, every Ghibelline in the peninsula lifted up his head, not least the Tarlati. Arezzo, in the hands of a faction, they took suddenly from the mountains by storm, and having got in they held it, and held it fast. When the Empire went down in 1313 they were not dislodged, and in 1320 Guido is Bishop and Lord of Arezzo. His first act shows the statesman and the captain. He made friends with the most redoubtable enemy Florence ever had—Castruccio Castracane. With this alliance and his famous band of knights he got back all the Ubertini and Pazzi had lost, for Florence had her hands full between Pisa and Castruccio. To the Aretine dominion he added many a place that till then had known nothing of her dominion, such as Lucignano and Chiusi, with many smaller places. He utterly destroyed Laterina out of hate for the Ubertini, and by treachery he took Città di Castello. Every power in Central Italy was soon allied with Florence against him. But he had crowned the Emperor with his own hands against the orders of the Pope, and he was friends with Castruccio. With these two allies he was safe. Though the Pope excommunicated him and gave his lordship to the Ubertini, he could not be removed save by death, which found him at last in 1327, when, after a quarrel with Castruccio, he went into the Pisan Maremma and died of fever in Montenero. It is strange that such a man should have died in his bed, but perhaps not so strange that he reconciled himself with the Church before the

end and received the Sacraments. His tomb in the Duomo by Agostino Agnolo da Siena tells the story of his life.

After his death things went hardly with Arezzo. In 1335 the Perugians besieged and took her, marking their victory with extraordinary insults and rejoicings. "The victorious Perugians," writes Mr. Heywood,[1] "not only caused the prostitutes who followed the army to run a *palio* in a peculiarly shameless way, but actually supplemented the performance with a solemn Mass in the captured Cathedral, above which floated the Perugian standard, the red lion of the Party Guelph on a white field. Money was coined within the sacred precincts, 'and (says the chronicler) there were also done many other despites which are not here set down.' Lastly the Perugians returned to Perugia. 'And the prostitutes who had run the *palio* at Arezzo returned; and they came all clad in rosy red, they and their horses; and they brought with them the said *palio*. Moreover, many marble images were brought which were found in the said Cathedral, the which images were drawn on wagons by oxen; and the oxen and the wagons were covered with red cloth; and the said wagons were set before the wall of the Church of S. Lorenzo of Perugia toward the piazza; and in like manner the said *palio* was placed there, *perpetua rei memorie*.'"

In the following year, 1336, Florence seized Arezzo, and though she got free again, yet forty-eight years later she came finally into the power of the Florentine Republic, sold by the Sieur Euguerrand de Courcy, a freebooter, who had already besieged and sacked her.

The fate of Arezzo was less unhappy than it might seem. Occupied by Florence at so early a date, she enjoyed all the advantages of the full and splendid life of that city, and, indeed, became, as it were, an outpost and suburb of the capital. Her citizens were never really loyal to Florence, but Vasari the Aretine has not hesitated to falsify history to do honour to the city which ruled his native state.

Perhaps this may explain the charm of Arezzo, her gift of

[1] "Palio and Ponte" (Methuen, 1904); p. 21.

serenity: she was able to be content; nor, after the anxieties she must have suffered, the hatred and division she must have experienced under the Ubertini and the Tarlati, can we be surprised at her acquiescence in a rule alien but stable. However this may be, it is as a city of profound quiet that we find her to-day, set with trees and great open spaces within her fair walls of brick at the head of those three valleys at the foot of the mountains.

Full of monuments as she is to her illustrious dead, it is not to them but to her churches we look for evidence of her splendour. Nor are we disappointed, for her churches perfectly reflect her history—they are full of the best works of alien masters.

There is S. Francesco, for instance, which one comes to first on leaving the station: a Franciscan church, of course, built nobly in the Franciscan style in 1322. A few works by Spinello Aretino greet us, it is true: a fresco on the entrance wall of Christ in the house of Simon with S. Mary Magdalen; and on the wall of the south transept we come upon his work again in a delightful Annunciation. Another Aretine master, Lorentino d' Arezzo, has painted in fresco—work now badly injured—the chapel of S. Antonio. And Spinello Aretino has some fine work in the chamber of the tower. But what we come to S. Francesco to see is not the work of such masters as these, but the strong and beautiful work of Piero della Francesca in the choir—work that one cannot better anywhere in Tuscany, nor, indeed, easily find its match.

The legend of the Holy Cross, its history from the beginning of the world until it was discovered by the Emperor Heraclius and later by S. Helena, which Piero della Francesca has painted here—by far the most considerable piece of work that he achieved during his whole life—is one of the more curious dreams of the Christian mind. No longer upheld in its entirety by the Catholic Church, it is nevertheless true in its intention, since, for the Middle Age at least, the Cross was indeed a lovely branch of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. The beautiful legend

told by Jacques de Voragine in the thirteenth century, and translated into English by William Caxton, is but one—albeit perhaps the loveliest—of those histories he thought worthy to be called "legends worth their weight in gold."

"The Holy Cross," Voragine tells us, "was found two hundred years after the resurrection of our Lord. It is read in the Gospel of Nicodemus that when Adam waxed sick, Seth, his son, went to the gates of Paradise terrestrial for to get the oil of mercy for to anoint withal his father's body. Then appeared to him S. Michael the angel, and said to him: Travail not thou in vain for this oil, for thou mayst not have it till five thousand and five hundred years be past, how be it that from Adam unto the Passion of our Lord were but five thousand one hundred and thirty-three years. In another place it is read that the angel brought him a branch, and commanded him to plant it. . . . When Seth came again he found his father dead, and planted this tree upon his grave, and it endured there unto the time of Solomon, and because he saw that it was fair he did do hew it down and set it in his house named Sattus. And when the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon she worshipped this tree, because she said the Saviour of all the world should be hanged thereon, by whom the realm of the Jews shall be defaced and cease. Solomon for this cause made it to be taken up and dolven deep in the ground. Now it happened after, that they of Jerusalem did do make a great pit for a piscina, whereat the ministers of the Temple should wash their beasts that they should sacrifice, and there found this tree and this piscina had such virtue that the angels descended and moved the water, and the first sick man that descended into the water after the moving was made whole of whatsoever sickness he was sick of. And when the time approached of the Passion of our Lord this tree arose out of the water and floated above the water, and of this piece of timber made the Jews the Cross of our Lord. Then, after this history, the Cross by which we be saved came of the tree by which we were damned,[1] and the water of that piscina had

[1] It was a branch of the Tree of Life that the angel gave to Seth, according to another version.

not this virtue only of the angel but of the tree. With this tree whereof the Cross was made there was a tree that went overthwart on which the arms of our Lord were nailed, and another piece above which was the table wherein the title was written, and another piece wherein the socket or mortise was made, wherein the body of the Cross stood in, so that there were four manner of trees, that is of palm, of cypress, of cedar, and of olive. So each of these four pieces was of one of these trees. This blessed Cross was put in the earth and hid by the space of a hundred years and more, but the mother of the Emperor which was named Helena found it in this manner. For Constantine came with a great multitude of barbarians right unto the river of the Danube, which would have gone over for to have destroyed all the country. And when Constantine had assembled his host he went and set them against that other party, but as soon as he began to pass the river he was much afraid because he should on the morn have battle. And in the night, as he slept in his bed, an angel awoke him and showed him the sign of the Cross in heaven and said to him: Behold on high in heaven. Then he saw the Cross made of right clear light and was written thereupon with letters of gold: In this sign thou shalt overcome the battle. Then was he all comforted of this vision, and on the morn he put in his banner the cross and made it to be borne tofore him and his host, and after smote in the host of his enemies and slew and chased great plenty. After this he did do call the bishops of the idols and demanded them to what god the sign of the Cross appertained. And when they could not answer, some Christian men that were there told him the mystery of the Cross and informed him in the faith of the Trinity. These anon he believed perfectly in God and did do baptize him, and after it happed that Constantine his son remembered the victory of his father and sent to Helena his mother for to find the Holy Cross. Then Helena went in to Jerusalem and did do assemble all the wise men of the country, and when they were assembled they would fain know wherefore they were called. Then one Judas said to them:

I wot well that she will know of us where the Cross of Jesu Christ was laid, but beware you all that none of you tell her, for I wot well then shall our law be destroyed. . . . And the Queen called them and demanded them the place where our Lord Jesu Christ had been crucified, and they would never tell ne enseign her. Then commanded she to burn them all, but then they doubted and were afraid and delivered Judas to her and said: Lady, this man is the son of a prophet and of a just man, and knoweth right well the law and can tell to you all things that ye shall demand him. Then the Queen let all the others go and retained Judas without more. Then she showed to him his life and death and bade him choose which he would. Show to me, said she, the place named Golgotha where our Lord was crucified, because, and to the end that we may find the Cross. Then said Judas: It is two hundred years passed and more and I was not then born. Then said to him the Lady: By Him that was crucified I shall make thee perish for hunger if thou tell not to me the truth. Then made she him to be cast into a dry pit and there tortured him by hunger and evil rest. When he had been seven days in that pit then said he: If I might be drawn out, I should say the truth. Then he was drawn out, and when he came to the place, anon the earth moved, and a fume of great sweetness was felt, in such wise that Judas smote his hands together for joy and said: In truth Jesu Christ, Thou art the Saviour of the world. It was so that Hadrian the Emperor had do make, in the same place where the Cross lay, a Temple of a goddess, because that all they that came in that place should adore that goddess, but the Queen did do destroy the Temple. Then Judas made him ready and began to dig, and when he came to twenty paces deep he found three crosses and brought them to the Queen, and because he knew not which was the Cross of our Lord, he laid them in the middle of the city, and abode the demonstrance of God; and about the hour of noon there was the corpse of a young man brought to be buried. Judas retained the bier and laid upon it one of the crosses, and after the

second, and when he laid on it the third anon the body that was dead came again to life. . . . When Helena had the Cross of Jesu Christ and saw that she had not the nails then she sent to Bishop Quiriacus that he should go to the place and seek the nails. Then did he dig in the earth so long that he found them shining as gold; then bare he them to the Queen, and anon as she saw them she worshipped them with great reverence. Then gave S. Helena a part of the Cross to her son and that other part she left in Jerusalem closed in gold, silver, and precious stones. And her son bare the nails to the Emperor, and the Emperor did do set them in his bridle and in his helm when he went to battle. . . .

"Now Cosdroe, King of the Persians, subdued to his empire all the realms of the world and he came to Jerusalem and was afeard and adrad of the sepulchre of our Lord, and returned, but he bare with him the part of the Holy Cross that S. Helena had left there. And then he would be worshipped of all the people as a God and did do make him a tower of gold and of silver wherein precious stones shone, and made therein the images of the sun and of the moon and of the stars, and made that by subtle conduits water to be hid and to come down in manner of rain. And in the last stage he made horses to draw chariots round about like as they had moved the tower and made it to seem as it had thundered. And thus this cursed man abode in this temple and delivered his realm to his son and did do set the Cross of our Lord by him and commanded that he should be called God of all the people. And as it is read in *Libro de Mitrali Officio:* the said Cosdroe, resident in his throne as a father, set the tree of the Cross on his right side instead of the sun, and the cock on the left side instead of the Holy Ghost, and commanded that he should be called father. And then Heraclius the Emperor assembled a great host and came for to fight with the son of Cosdroe by the river of Danube; and then it pleased to either prince that each of them should fight one against that other upon the bridge and he that should vanquish and overcome his adversary should be prince of the Empire,

without hurting either of both hosts, and so it was ordained and sworn, and that whosomever should help his prince should have forthwith his legs and arms cut off and to be plunged and cast into the river. And then Heraclius commended him all to God and to the Holy Cross with all the devotion that he might and then they fought long. And at last our Lord gave the victory to Heraclius and subdued to him his Empire. . . . Then Heraclius came to Cosdroe and found him sitting in his siege of gold and said to him: For as much as after this manner thou hast honoured the tree of the Cross if thou wilt receive baptism and the faith of Jesu Christ I shall get it to thee, and yet shalt thou hold thy crown and realm with little hostages and I shall let thee have thy life. And if thou wilt not I shall slay thee with my sword and shall smite off thy head. And when he would not accord thereto, he did anon do smite off his head, and commanded that he should be buried because he was a king. And he found with him one his son of the age of ten years whom he did do baptize, and lifted him from the font and left to him the realm of his father; and then did do wrak that tower and gave the silver to them of his host and gave the gold and the precious stones for to repair the churches that the tyrant had destroyed and took the Holy Cross and brought it again to Jerusalem. . . ."

It is this golden legend that Piero has painted so vigorously here in the choir of S. Francesco. How far are we in contemplating these frescoes from the passionate asceticism, the unearthly beauty of Fra Angelico or Simone Martini! It is as though a new desire had suddenly been born into the world—a desire for life where Simone, after all, would have been content with beauty. What magnificent vitality have those beautiful women, how valiant are those men, how puissant those angels! And, above all, Piero has filled heaven and earth with radiant light. It is in the clear and nimble air, in the fair white light of our real and beautiful daylight, that he alone of his contemporaries has dared at last to paint man and woman in all the sweet energy of life, full of that long breath of God which at dawn in a garden first gave us light. The air, exquisite as a

precious stone faintly coloured with the thought of God, caresses the fair flesh of his figures as in our world, only he has given it some perfection which we can only hope to see. For his light is the light of the profound air of heaven, and he seems to rejoice and be glad in it, as the musical lark which adventures nearer than we dare to the sun, which is as the smile of God. He has already discovered that there is no black in all our world. Along the long horizon of the east he has laid the shadow of the fingers of God, which is the fairest sunrise; and it is the flash of an angel's wings that obscures the moonbeams with light, while through the tired eyelids, delicate and translucent, of the great emperor, dazzles the Cross, itself a glowing jewel, which brings heaviness to an end with a vision of morning. Those clouds for ever a-sail so delicately in the sky, what are they but light expressed and made visible, more fragile than the sunbeams, of which indeed they are the delicate, white daughters, made not of earth, but of dew and light and the jewelled fragments of the sea? They have the shape of the wings of angels, and they are as fair as the fairest. They are the ships of heaven burthened with light. They are the children of the sun; from him they set out whiter than snow in the dawn, to him they will return at evening, drenched through and through with the colour of heaven. For Piero alone of all his fellows seems to have observed a new form of energy in light itself; to him it is the one thing that is very precious. He perhaps understood that the act of creation began and ended with *Fiat Lux*. From that moment life began, and lasts while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, or the ceaseless dawns that encircle our world be not finished, or the luminous night shall still climb out of the reluctant sea, until the shadows flee away because there is no more light under the sky, since it has fled back into the eyes of God.

One lonely and magnificent figure he left behind him at Arezzo in the Cathedral—a figure of S. Mary Magdalen, very noble and reticent. She adorns no altar, but in a quiet corner of the great church—a little lonely, because, perhaps,

unlike the great multitude of the saints, she has loved much, and seen, and understood, and has suffered great experiences, and only learned to acquiesce at last in the scrupulous orderliness of God because of love—she stands very sorrowful, since she alone of all those clouds on clouds of saints really understands. Well, it is always so; we find Piero emotionally under the influence of the Middle Age, and yet himself perhaps a kind of emancipator or deliverer from its mysticism, at times hardly less astonishing than Luca Signorelli, his pupil. For he, too, was occupied rather with his art than with the expression of ideas about religion. He was the first painter, perhaps, to study perspective scientifically. Problems of light, the action of light on beautiful faces or hair, the action of light upon light, would certainly seem to have fascinated him almost all his life long. And yet he has not discarded the ideas that were then gradually becoming less insistent in the world, but in all their modesty and beauty he has used them without question as a means of attaining a beauty bought with much toil and feverish endeavour. His Magdalen is not the ecstatic and splendid courtesan that we see on Titian's canvas, but a beautiful and lonely woman, who will ever remember that lingering dawn in the garden, when, in the midst of her passionate weeping, the gardener came so quietly and spoke her name, and in a moment she knew Him whom she had loved.

Other things, too, there are in that beautiful Italian church, though none so fine as this Magdalen. The tomb of Gregory X in the right aisle, and close by, over an early Christian sarcophagus, a fresco of the Crucifixion by Spinello Aretino. Nor is Spinello the only Aretine artist whose work we find here, for the fine sculptures of the high altar—the Madonna with S. Gregory and S. Donato, with scenes from the lives of those saints—are from the hand of Giovanni di Francesco da Arezzo, and were made about 1365.

In the left aisle we come upon the noble tomb—the work of the two Sienese, Agostino and Agnolo—of the great and terrible Bishop Guido Tarlati, whereon, set forth in carving, are the scenes of his life even as I have told them.

Close by opens the chapel of the Madonna, a building of the eighteenth century. We shall scarcely rejoice in it, though we shall at what it contains—five excellent terra-cottas by Andrea della Robbia.

In the sacristy—why in the sacristy?—is a fine terra-cotta relief of the Annunciation by Antonio Rossellino, a fresco by Bartolommeo della Gatta of S. Jerome in penitence and three *predella* pictures by his master, Luca Signorelli, of the Birth, Presentation, and Marriage of the Blessed Virgin.

But perhaps the most beautiful church in Arezzo is not the Cathedral, fine though it be, but S. Maria della Pieve, with its tower and fine façade and sculptures. Within, too, it is delightful, and it holds a very great treasure—an altarpiece by Pietro Lorenzetti. Built up in compartments with pinnacles, this splendid work was painted in Siena in 1320. There we see the Blessed Virgin, in half-length, with our Lord in her arms between S. John Baptist, S. Matthew, S. John Evangelist, and S. Donato. Above is the Annunciation and the Assumption, S. Luke and S. Vincent and S. Catherine, S. Paul and another Saint, S. Marcellinus, S. Augustine, and S. Agatha; over all stands S. Reparata.

Only a man of the greatest force could have compassed this fine and even passionate work. The hand of Pietro is everywhere visible, and the picture may, in fact, take its place beside the work of Giotto. There is no *predella*, and, save for some abrasion in the face of the infant Saviour, the work is in perfect preservation.

Coming out of the church we pass under Vasari's Logge to the Corso and the Palazzo Pubblico, now a prison. Close by is the Via dell' Orto, where at No. 22 Petrarch was born. He was an Aretine only by chance, his father having been expelled from Florence but a few months before his birth. He left the city when he was still a child, and only once returned to it, in 1350, when he went to Rome for the Jubilee.

Of the other churches of Arezzo, only S. Bernardo and the SS. Annunziata hold anything very well worth seeing.

Luca Signorelli *Pinacoteca Arezzo*

ALTAR-PIECE

S. Bernardo is in the Via di S. Bernardo, a turning out of the Corso near the station, and there in a lunette over the entrance is a vision of S. Bernard by Bartolommeo della Gatta. The Santissima Annunziata, which is reached from the Corso by the Via Garibaldi, is a fine Renaissance church built by Antonio da Sangallo; it contains a fresco of the Evangelists by Spinello Aretino, and a picture of the Madonna and Child with S. Francis by Pietro da Cortona.

Close by where the Via Garibaldi crosses the Via di S. Lorentino is the Museum, with a small picture gallery on the second floor. Here are some characteristic works by Margharitone of Arezzo, together with a fine Signorelli, the Madonna, Saints, and Prophets, painted in 1519 for the Compagna di S. Girolamo; and two works by Bartolommeo della Gatta—a S. Roch standing, painted in 1479, and a S. Roch kneeling. Here, too, is a fine Tabernacle by Alunno di Domenico, a Magdalen and S. Antony at the foot of the Cross, a beautiful work by Sellajo, Madonna of the Rose-hedge, and a Christ bearing the Cross, by Rosso Fiorentino.

There are also several works by Vasari, one of Arezzo's most valiant sons.

These are the more obvious treasures of a city which is in itself one of the most delightful of Tuscan towns, a place, too, that is the key to a whole world of fine country and beautiful things; the Casentino, for instance, and the upper Val d' Arno and the great pass into the Tiber Valley with Borgo S. Sepolcro as a prize at the end. Of the Casentino I have spoken elsewhere, and in truth we need not go so far as that to find one of those delights to which Arezzo is the gate. Only some half-mile out of the Barriera Vittorio Emanuele, taking the second road on the right and then the first on the left, is the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie, with a fine porch by Benedetto da Majano and an altar by Andrea della Robbia. Here, too, is a fresco of the Madonna of Mercy by Bartolo di Fredi, and a fragment of a scene from the life of S. Donato by Piero della Francesca.

But the most beautiful of all these treasures to which Arezzo

holds the key is Borgo San Sepolcro in the Tiber Valley. Though it is very far over the hills you may nowadays go easily there and back in a day by the little railway which crosses the mountains by the aid of many tunnels, and takes you easily over the great watershed that divides Val d' Arno from Val di Tevere. There are very few things more lovely in the world than the upper valley of the Arno, but one of them is, I think, the upper valley of the Tiber. It is a landscape more virile than Umbria—a landscape by Piero della Francesca, in fact, and in Borgo it is his work you find, for the little town is his birthplace.

That "Resurrection of Christ" in the Municipio is perhaps the most beautiful representation of the triumph of Christ in the world. You journey over the mountains from Arezzo for hours amid all the clear beauty of Tuscan hills that have something not Tuscan about them, and at last in the valley of the Tiber you come upon a tiny city at the foot of Monte Maggiore of the Central Apennines. There, amid all the quietness of a country place, in the cool rooms of the Municipio, are set such works of Piero as remain in his birthplace—an altarpiece in oil and tempera, till lately in the Ospedale della Misericordia, and two frescoes, S. Ludovico and the Resurrection.

The fresco of the Resurrection comes upon us with a kind of surprise; we had not suspected Piero of so much thoughtfulness. It is as though he had listened to some voice, or seen a vision, or on some fortunate day had been led away the captive of Love, for him as for Dante a Lord of terrible aspect, who has shown him the places of Death and Sorrow. In the cold light of the earliest morning, mere sunless dawn as yet, Christ has risen and is standing in His tomb. His experience is in His face, the dawn of knowledge, perhaps, of the sorrows of humanity. It is as though for the first time He had really understood the power of evil, to which, after all, we are so unwillingly the slaves, the hopeless misery of that state of imperfect love. The noise of Hell has furrowed His face, and He has only just escaped into our quiet world. Beneath

that terrible and beautiful figure, inspired for the first time with thought, down whose endless vistas His soul has fled these three days, lie four soldiers, sleeping in the noiseless twilight. Behind the green trees on the right the first exquisite frail light of dawn is coming to comfort the world, and with the return of the Prince of Life the first day of spring has come; already the flowers have blossomed and the trees have budded behind Him as He came out of the sunrise, and when He shall turn at last into the garden, where Mary will find Him, those bare boughs, that naked hill-side, that brown and sterile earth will quicken, too, even as the hills that He has already crossed. All the passion of His encounter with Death and the dead is graven on His face, and though men sleep He can know no rest; He is up before them, and the whole long day is waiting for Him. He is stronger than Time, which has swept everything away, for He who made Death has struck him dead again. Yes, in looking on this fresco one seems to understand that for all those years before He came there is only silence. For Piero has expressed not only the old magical truths of Paganism and Christianity, the joy of the world at the coming of Spring, the triumph of the Prince of Life in a world pallid with the fear of Death, but the subtler and more terrible thoughts, too, of the age of thought that was just then dawning on the world. He seems to see a God no longer delicate and exquisitely pitiful, gracious and victorious in an encounter where the end was not doubtful for a moment, but one innocent and almost ignorant of evil and the tragedy of mankind, suddenly confronted with it.

Well may we call Piero the master of Signorelli, the Orvieto frescoes are implicit in this terrible Christ. But, curiously enough, nothing of Piero is to be found in the Standard by Luca here in the Municipio of Borgo San Sepolcro. The Crucifixion, which covers one side of this Standard, is a work of restless dramatic realism, and, in fact, the least successful of all Signorelli's renderings of this subject. It is heavy and hard and without harmony. We turn from it with relief to

the Perugino in the Duomo or to the Matteo di Giovanni there and at the Servi.

The Ascension by Perugino in the Duomo is a beautiful work, though only in part by the master. It is divided into two parts: above Christ in a *mandorla* of Cherubim, surrounded by angels playing music, ascends into heaven; while below Madonna, surrounded by the Twelve Apostles with S. Paul, watches His flight very wistfully. Far away we catch a glimpse of the world, while the sky is serene and full of air in which delicate clouds float, on which the four angels stand playing, and seem about to dance for joy.

The Matteo di Giovanni here is an interesting work, a polyptych, the centre panel of which, the Baptism, by Piero della Francesca, is now in the National Gallery. Piero had painted there a figure almost as strange and tragic as the Christ of the Resurrection, and about it Matteo placed some charming scenes and figures—scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin and S. John the Baptist, with SS. Peter and Paul.

Better than this polyptych is Matteo's work in the Servi Church, painted in 1457, an Assumption with S. Paul and S. Lucy, S. John Baptist, and S. Filippo Benizzi.

It was with such things as these in my heart that I made my way back to Arezzo, and, regretting them, took my leave of Southern Tuscany.

NOTES

Note 1, *page* 4

ON the history of Castel-Fiorentino the reader should consult M. Cioni in "Miscellanea Storica della Valdelsa," An vi (1898), fasc. 2 and 3. Signor Cioni gives us a documented account of Castel-Fiorentino during the reign of Henry VII and a Summary of the history of the city. He argues that Castel-Fiorentino was the "centre of the national defence" in the year 1312–13 when Henry attacked Florence at the behest of Dante. With his conclusions I am not altogether in agreement. Henry VII came into Tuscany from Rome by way of Todi, Arezzo, and the Val d' Arno *superiore*, where at Incisa (Ancisa) the Florentines compelled him to fight before, encamping at S. Salvi, he was able to lay siege to Florence. This was in September, 1312. There he remained, surrounding the city it is true, but never daring to attack, till 1 November, when, in the night, he crossed the Arno and set out *viâ* S. Casciano for Poggibonsi. So far all the defence as well as the attack had taken place far to the east of Castel-Fiorentino.

In Poggibonsi the Emperor was attacked from Colle and S. Gimignano by the forces of King Robert and of Florence respectively, "so that his state was much diminished." His forces were further depleted by the departure of Rupert of Flanders, who, as he marched up Val d' Elsa, was taken on the flank at Castel-Fiorentino, and a great part of his men were slain. This is the first time Castel-Fiorentino comes into the story.

On 9 March, 1313, Henry himself, with scarce 1,000 horse, marched up Val d' Elsa into Val d' Arno and so to Pisa. That he was not attacked as he passed Castel-Fiorentino is not surprising, for no burgher levies, however numerous, would be likely to leave the shelter of their walls to attack 1,000 German troops. It is surprising, however, if Castel-Fiorentino were "the centre of the national defence," seeing that only a short time before Rupert of Flanders had been crushed.

In Pisa Henry remained till 5 August, 1313, when he set out for Naples considerably strengthened [*see* VILLANI, "Cronica," Lib. ix, cap. 51]. On the way he attacked Castel-Fiorentino, but was evidently not anxious to take it, for the assault was unsuccessful and not pressed, and ten days later we find he had passed Siena and was encamped at Stigliano and Orgia on 16 August, forty miles from Castel-Fiorentino, and this after encamping at Montaperto and negotiations with Siena. On 24 August he was dead in Buonconvento.

Such is the story of the Emperor's attack on Tuscany, and I do not find any evidence there at all to support the statement that Castel-Fiorentino, which Professor Villari in his account of the affair does not so much as name, was "the centre of the national defence" as asserted by Signor Cioni.

Note 2, *page* 58

While it is true to say that history has little or nothing to do with the town of Poggibonsi, strictly, I suppose, one should not dissever the history of the *borgata* from that of the *castello*. In regard to Poggibonsi, however, I think such a separation is to be defended, for while the town of Poggibonsi has no international significance, the *castello* above it is of considerable importance.

The town (*borgata*) of Poggibonsi is, however, of considerable antiquity. It was founded after the battle of Colle, "when the Florentines, with Count Guido di Montfort (1270), vicar in Tuscany for King Charles, destroyed Poggibonsi [the

castello] and demolished the walls. Then the *terrazzani*, deprived of all civil jurisdiction, were constrained to descend into the plain, where they built an open *borgata*. Hence the origin of what we call modern Poggibonsi." *See* RAZZI in "Miscellanea Storica della Valdelsa," An v (1897), fasc. 2. *Cf.* REPETTI "Dizionario," not only under "Poggibonsi" but also under "Poggio Imperiale."

Poggibonsi, or Poggi-Bonzi, as Lassells calls it, certainly existed as a flourishing town with a "famous" snuff factory in the seventeenth century. Richard Lassells came to Poggibonsi from Florence precisely along the route of the Emperor Henry VII. "From hence" [Florence], he says, "passing through San Cassiano we arrived at night at Poggi-Bonzi, a little towne famous for perfumed Tobacco in powder, which the Italians and Spaniards take farre more frequently than we, as needing neither candle nor tinder-boxe to light it withall; nor useing any other pipes than their owne noses."

As for the *castello* of Poggibonsi that the Florentines destroyed after the battle of Colle, it rose again in Florentine hands to figure in the battle of 1479, when, after the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy, Pope Sixtus IV having leagued himself with Siena and Ferrante of Naples, the allies invaded the Florentine territory and won a victory at Poggio Imperiale. See W. HEYWOOD, "A Pictorial Chronicle of Siena" (Torrini, Siena, 1902), pp. 71–2. This victory is commemorated in the Sala del Mappamondo of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena in a fresco by Francesco di Andrea and Giovanni di Cristofano. See BORGHESI e BANCHI, "Nuovi Documenti per la storia dell' arte Senese" (Siena, Torrini, 1898), p. 226.

After taking Poggibonsi the allies attacked Colle, but the place made a gallant defence, even the women fighting in the breaches made by the cannon. They were beaten at last, however, and the triumphal entry of the allies is commemorated in one of the Tavolette di Gabella. *Cf.* W. HEYWOOD, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

Note 3, *page* 77

On this legend, the substantial truth of which seems very doubtful, *see* L. BANCHI, "Le origini favolese di Siena secondo

una presunta cronica romana di Tisbo Colonnese" (Siena Tip. all' ins. di S. Bernardino, 1882 (per le nozze Papanti Girandini).

Note 4, *page* 77

What we know of Roman Siena we owe entirely to the enthusiasm and learning of P. Rossi in two *Conferenze*, and several articles in the *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria.* Consult especially "Siena, Colonia Romano" in *Conferenze della Com. Sen. di Stor. Patria* (Siena, 1897) and "Le Inscrizioni romana del territorio senese" in *Bullettino Senese*, vols. ii, iv, &c.

The Birth of the Commune

Note 5, *page* 78

There was certainly something more than the mere germ of feudalism in Italy before Charlemagne. It is impossible to go into the subject here. As to the Bishops, Lanzani ("Storia dei Comuni Italiani dalle origini al 1313") points out, their power was in great part due to the reforms of Charlemagne. But even before his day they had been large landed proprietors, and were then among the principal tenants *in capite* of the Crown, ranking with marquises and counts and forming part of the *ordines majores* of the feudal nobility. Moreover, their spiritual dignity and the fact that their ecclesiastical benefices were not hereditary seemed to commend them for temporal power also. In the anarchy which followed the death of Charlemagne they confirmed their power, acquiring many of the prerogatives the Crown was unable to exercise which it seemed could safely be conceded as life privileges to an elective aristocracy. The chief gainer, however, by the rise of the Bishops was not the Crown but the Italian people, who at that time formed the lowest class of the inhabitants of the cities, and who, though in a state of political inferiority, carried on all the manufactures, the trade and commerce of the country. Feudalism at first proved not favourable to the

social position of the trading classes. The Bishop, whose ecclesiastical dignity was for many purposes a civil office, appeared really as an emancipator. For it is certain that every privilege and immunity conceded by the Sovereign to the Bishop tended to decrease the power and authority of the lay representatives of the Crown within the walls of the cities. In the inevitable struggle it was only natural that the Italians, *i.e.*, the mass of the urban population, should prefer a ruler whose interests were bound up with those of their city and who had, in fact, raised walls to protect them from the hordes of barbarians who marched from one end of Italy to the other, whose natural prey they were. We have thus a state within a state, a *gau* within a *gau*, and within the civic territory we find two forces in opposition; both feudal, both owing their origin to the same ideas. The government of the Count continued to exhibit that spirit of individualism and of disintegration which, apart from the cities, characterized for centuries the political movement in Italy: that of the Bishop lent itself gradually more and more to the evolution of the *civitas*. Presently every vestige of the political unity of the *gau* is lost and forgotten, save the obligation of the free man to join the *heribannus* when summoned by the Count in the name of the Sovereign; and finally even this relic of his authority is taken from the Count, and we see the city with its two classes of population under the exclusive and undisputed authority of the Bishop, whose dominion in Siena at any rate seems to have reached beyond the walls over a considerable tract of suburban territory.

Thus rises clearly before us the *civitas* and the *contado* (*comitatus*); the *civitas* governed by laws and traditions which were Latin, the *contado* by those of the Teutonic race. We should almost certainly be wrong, however, if we were to attribute the foundation of municipal government in Italy to the Latin population. The population of the cities was mixed always: the pioneers of Italian enfranchisement were probably the Lombardi and Cattani. (See G. VOLPE, "Questioni fondamentali sull' origine e svolgimento dei Comuni Italiani" (sec. x–xiv), Pisa, Tip. Successori Fratelli Nistri, 1904.)

In Siena, probably more than in any other city, the Count

continued to exercise beside the Bishop some considerable authority within the city itself. It was not the Count, whom even in Siena the Bishop had superseded, who brought the rule of the Bishops low at last. It was war. The guilds and associations of handicraftsmen were of necessity converted into military companies. Soon every quarter of the city had its Captain and its banner. And it is here we discover the germs of the next political movement.

As yet the Italian had no share in his own government. He had been ruled by the Count and then by the Bishop. The dependence of the latter in time of war on the associations and guilds for fighting-men brought about a new state of affairs. To begin with, it split the whole body of citizens into two great classes, never very clearly defined, it is true, but in the mass obvious enough—the *milites* or fighting-men and the *populus*. The former were most probably chiefly composed of the lower Teutonic nobility. They saw their opportunity in the dependence of the State upon their services as soldiers and seized it. They demanded a part in their own government, and it was impossible to deny it to them. Thus rose the consuls, their representatives, who at first seem to have advised the Bishop, then ruled with him, and at length superseded him altogether. In the first half of the twelfth century we find the Bishop and the consuls associated in the government of the city and the latter already becoming predominant. Just how these changes came about we do not know, the Chronicles are silent; but it seems certain that the lower feudal nobility within the city were the authors of a change that was by no means of purely Latin origin.

Thus rose the Commune, a mixed government, lay and ecclesiastic, which seems to have been particularly perfect in Siena. What was this Commune? It was absolutely aristocratic. The people (*populus*) was still a very pitiable thing. It was not till 1147 that it won its first modest victory and elected a consul to represent it. This probably came about by mediation of the Bishop, who possibly hoped to retain his power by creating a formidable opponent to the consul of the *milites*. There was no doubt much bitterness between the two parties (*milites* and *populus*), and the move

was very likely effective at the moment. But the effective representation of the people doomed the power of the Bishop, and already in 1158 the Emperor acknowledged the existence of the Commune, probably gladly, and protected it. And when, in 1169, Bishop Ranieri, who had ruled so long and so well, quarrelled with the consuls who wished to compel the Sienese clergy to transfer their allegiance to the antipope, the end was come. After placing Siena under an interdict, he fled for his life, and not long after died in Narni, on 27 May, 1170. (See LANGTON DOUGLAS, "A History of Siena," pp. 22–27.) The final popular victory was achieved eighty years later, when, in 1253, the *arti* appear effectively upon the scene and the Captain of the People was established. The Rise of the Commune then may be summed up under the following heads:—

(α) The Counts are superseded by the Bishops.
(β) The Bishops are superseded by the Commune, composed at first of *nobili* and *gentiluomini*.
(γ) The *Populus* imposes itself upon the Commune. The movement began in 1147 and was really completed in 1253 with the establishment of the Captain of the People.

The reader may consult with profit Mr. HEYWOOD'S "Guide to Siena," p. 30.

Note 6, *page* 81

It would be consoling to believe that Siena thus early established a civilized and Latin rule in the *contado* in place of the barbarism of the nobles. But that she did not is certain. It is possible that the Customary Law of Siena at this time contained the germs of a civilized order, but the reader must not confuse—even at a later period—the internal legislation of the Commune with Siena's feudal rule in the *contado*. See *infra*, p. 330, note 9.

The Fourteenth Century in Siena

Note 7, pages 76, 92

The sketch I have given of Sienese history, slight as it is, embraces all that period in which there remained to her a chance of holding her own in Tuscany. After the battle of Colle that chance was no longer hers: the victory of Florence was certain. Of course, as has been said, the eventual triumph of Florence was in some sort certain from the beginning. The geographical position of Siena denied her too much in comparison with her rival. But for years she had been able to hold her own, and at Montaperto had for a moment seen Florence at her mercy. She refused the opportunity offered by the chance of battle of disposing of her enemy once and for all, and that opportunity was never to recur. Why?

In a book such as this political questions can only be dealt with very briefly, but we may perhaps try to give some hint of the answer to that question; and for this reason: because we have so unhesitatingly dated the decadence of Siena from the end of the thirteenth century and the destruction of the Government of the Twenty-Four, though to many the Government of the Nine seems, and in some sort rightly, the best Siena ever had.

What we see when the Government of the Twenty-Four has fallen is the very real development of Democracy in Siena. Now history continually shows us the spectacle of decadence marching hand in hand with a growing Democracy, and for all that I could ever hear or learn we have no single example to the contrary. It might seem that the development of Democracy is itself decadence, or at least a perfect symptom of it.

Democracy as we understand it to-day means politically the government of a nation or an empire by the most ignorant of its people, and I suppose that no one can be found to defend it save as the only thing left to us that is bearable at all. Whether, in fact, it prove even possible under pressure from without remains to be seen, and he would appear wisest who is most sceptical. Siena certainly gives us no encouragement.

As long as her government was aristocratic she was just able to hold her own against Florence in spite of the latter's immense natural advantages. When she once established a form of Democracy within her gates she was finally vanquished, and by herself.

We have seen the failure of Siena ascribed to many causes: to the rupture with the Papacy, to her change from Ghibellinism to Guelfism, to the economic effect of the establishment of the Florentines as Papal bankers, to the Plague of 1348, in which she suffered so severely. As I believe, there is only one final cause for the failure of a State as of an individual, and that cause is inward rottenness. It was Siena herself who destroyed Siena, and we see her at work all through the fourteenth century. It is true that that period shows her more free than ever before, more completely subject only to herself; probably the condition, the material condition, of her people was better than it had been, and in the general amelioration of the world it would have been surprising had it not been so. But it is better to be strong than not being strong to indulge in liberty, which is the reward of the strong. It is better to be strong than to live well, to eat plenty, or to dwell in good houses. It is better to be strong than to be free, or even to be happy, because if you be strong all these things shall be added to you, and if you be not strong, though you have all these things they shall be taken from you.

The development of Democracy ever follows one or both of two courses: it produces first a plutocracy and then a mere anarchy, or it produces at once faction—the curse of party government, whose basis is not love but hate. In Siena, as we might expect in a highly concentrated city State, we have both these curses produced together. After Colle (1269) the plutocracy for its own ends insisted that the city should henceforth profess itself Guelf, and already by 1277 "the good merchants of the Guelf party"[1] should alone be capable of holding office in the "Thirty-Six," which later became the "Fifteen" (1280), and finally the "Nine" (1285). The

[1] There is a Pecksniffian unction in the phrase that recalls, how vividly, the modern Radical.

nobles, the aristocracy, were got rid of; henceforth Siena was to be a futile Democracy at the mercy, as always, of riches.

It is only the might-have-been that is profoundly interesting in history; and in the change that the fourteenth century saw in Siena we have a fine example of that truism. How different the whole history of Italy, even of Europe, might have been if Siena had been true to herself, had destroyed Florence after Montaperto in 1260, and had never become Guelf after Colle in 1269. Then when Henry VII came into Italy in 1310 there would have been no Tuscan League, no "wolf polluting Arno," as Dante said, but Siena, the strongest power in Tuscany, enthusiastically Ghibelline, would have greeted him, and the Empire might have been indeed restored. Siena failed, and she failed because she had delivered herself to the Democracy.

What indeed befell was vastly different from what might have been, and after all the chief sufferer was Siena. Incapable of war since she had deprived the nobles of power, she was distracted by faction, class hatred, and party strife. Deprived of responsibility, the nobles, her only military leaders capable of defending her, indulged in family feuds and private war, and when the Companies of Adventure appeared, the direct result of the incapacity of the people for war, they joined them and preyed upon the fear of the cities whose citizens were entirely absorbed in money-making. The State became a mere means to an end—money-making and peace to be bought at the price demanded by the only virile class left in Italy—the outlaws, the nobles.

This contemptible state of affairs is immortalized for us in the frescoes of Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, where we see the sentimental ideals of the hypocritical Democratic Government confusedly set forth in detail.

Meantime wealth increased vastly, and the hired armies marched about seeking employment. Then in 1348 the Black Death, like the wrath of God, fell upon Siena, and completed what the Democracy had so well begun. In that appalling catastrophe the Nine went down, and were replaced

by that cynical jest we call the Government of the Twelve. For near seventy years, then, Siena had been governed by a rich middle class; it now entered on the second stage of Democratic Government—it fell into the hands of the small tradesmen. This befell in 1355, and the final stage was achieved in 1368, when the artisans, the *popolo minuto*, acquired a part in the government. Meanwhile faction grew stronger every day, the Companies of Adventure became more and more intolerable, and at last commercial depression fell upon the city. The Democracy had achieved the result it has invariably achieved. Siena was ruined and utterly weak; only the confusion of Italy saved her for a period from that Nemesis that had awaited her ever since Colle—that new and foreign government which was to take hold of her and draw her into a State at whose head, had she known how to use the means she had, she might possibly have stood.

What is, then, chiefly worth our notice during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is not the political decadence but the Renaissance of Painting, which the wealth and luxury of the merchants certainly assisted. It is to that we shall devote our attention in this book when thinking of these two centuries.

Poggio S. Cecilia

Note 8, *page* 201

From an historical point of view this is one of the most interesting places in the Sienese *contado*. When the Ghibellines were expelled from Siena in 1269 they took refuge where they could. No doubt their hopes were raised by the Sicilian Vespers at Easter, 1282, but already Florence, Siena, Lucca, Prato, and Volterra were leagued against their cause, and they were afraid to move. In 1284 came the battle of Meloria, in which their last hope, Pisa, suffered the loss of her fleet. The exiles were then without a refuge. In October, 1285, however, the Sienese *fuorusciti*, with the help of the Bishop of Arezzo, seized Poggio S. Cecilia, a place then very strongly fortified, and easily defended even to-day. "And," says the

Chronicler, "they held the place against the Sienese and the Florentines and all Tuscany for fourteen months and eighteen days until they were compelled to eat rats and to gnaw the leather of their shields; and they collected the dew for the thirst which they had. . . . Finally on the night of Good Friday, being able to endure no longer, they abandoned the castle and issued forth and fled during a great rain; and so they saved themselves alive."

However, Andrea Dei tells a different tale. "Many of them were taken as they went forth and were led to Siena, and while they were in the Palace of the Podestà, whither they had been taken to be put to death, the people rose in tumult, crying, 'Peace! Peace!' and they began to attack the Palace. Wherefore the Nine who then governed the State were afraid, and they gave them the gonfalon and surrendered unto them the prisoners. Then the people took the prisoners to the Palace of the Bishop, who had come to their aid when the tumult commenced. And they were by themselves and the Guelfs with their followers set upon them in the Campo; and they brake them and discomfited them, the Monday after Easter; and they got them to the Palace of the Bishop and drew forth the prisoners and led them into the Campo; and there they cut off the heads of five of the chief among them and the rest they hanged between the Arbia and the Bozzone; and the number of them was sixty."

"Poggio Santa Cecilia," Mr. Heywood tells us (I have quoted his translation), "was razed to the ground." *Cf.* W. Heywood and L. Olcott, "Guide to Siena" (Torrini, Siena, 1903), pp. 52–3. *Cf.* also Villari, "I primi due Secoli," Appendix.

Note 9, *page* 204

The reader must not suppose that Siena stood alone among the mediæval Communes of Italy in the badness of her rule in the *contado*. Her rule was absolutely bad, but not relatively. Some of Siena's subject cities were loyal to her when the end came. None of Florence's were, I think. At any rate it seems that Florence ruled her *contado* even worse than Siena,

and Mr. Heywood tells me that Perugia did too; he also draws my attention to the defence of Monticchiello, which "held out gallantly for more than two weeks," the garrison being "compelled to defend themselves with stones, since powder was lacking for the arquebuses." This in the defence of the Sienese State against the Imperialists in 1553. He adds, "Neither Florence nor Perugia inspired such love and loyalty as that."

The explanation may be that there were Sienese in the city. No blame, however, can be too strong for such a system as that by which Siena ruled her *contado*. If it were indeed better than that of Florence and Perugia, it is difficult to understand how there was any Italy to unite in 1860. As regards Lucignano itself, when the Imperialists got in, in 1553, they nailed a woman to the gate like a hawk for refusing to cry "Duca" and continuing to cry "Lupa." This may have been a Lucignano woman; on the other hand, it may have been a Sienese.

The Battle of Scanagallo

Note 10, *page* 217

Somewhere in this valley, between Foiano and Marciano, in August, 1554, the battle was fought which made an end of the Sienese Republic and established, or rather made possible, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, of which, in 1557, Siena came to form a part.

It was in the January of that year that Cosimo de' Medici took the field with an army commanded by the Marquis of Marignano. On the 26th of that month Siena was invested. The Sienese general was Pietro Strozzi, a Florentine exile and a Marshal of France, whose father had died in a prison of the Medici. This fact doubtless embittered the campaign. With her usual bravery, Siena took the field, and after various skirmishes and fights the two armies faced each other on the heights above the torrent of Scanagallo. It was the 2nd of August, about eleven in the morning, and the sun very hot, when the battle broke. "The Spanish men-at-arms advanced, and raising their visors as they passed the infantry, smiled

upon them with joyful faces, to show their good-will to give them victory, knowing well [says the historian] that in battle cavalry alone decide the day." The earth trembled beneath their tread, and they seemed, as writes an eye-witness of their charge, "a mountain of iron with plumes waving to heaven, a spectacle as gallant as it was beautiful." About Strozzi were gathered his fellow-citizens, exiles of Florence, while above them floated a green banner bearing for motto the line of Dante: "*Libertà vo cercando ch' è si cara.*" . . .

"Like two mighty waves, black below, foam-topped above, the cavalry of either host hurled together. There was a thunder of rushing hoofs, a crash of steel, and lo! with a shriek of treason and fear the French standard-bearer turned and fled. In a moment the splendid squadron divided, broke, and spurred hard out of the fray, bought (it was said) with Spanish gold—*dodici fiaschi di stagno pieni di scudi d' oro*—a treachery and a flight which lives even to-day in the songs wherewith the *contadini* awake the echoes of that solitary country-side—

> "'O Piero Strozzi in du' son i tuoi soldati
> Al Poggio delle Donne in que' fossati;
> Meglio de' vili cavalli di Franza
> Le nostre donne fecero provanza.'

"All was lost; but the Sienese were not minded to yield. . . . High on the Poggio delle Donne, Strozzi, clad in black armour inlaid with gold, mounted on an Arab charger and with his truncheon in his hand, played the part alike of general and soldier, and played them well. He spoke words of comfort to his infantry, declaring that the flight of the French was nothing but a ruse; he bade the drummers and the pipers sound to battle; all the banners waved as if for victory; and the Swiss charged down the hill shouting *Francia! Francia!* while from the hostile ranks arose the answering cry of *Spagna! Imperio!* . . . It became a butchery pure and simple, and for two long miles, even to the gates of Lucignano, the ground was strewn with the banners, arms, and corpses of Strozzi's ruined army; while he himself, with

bullet wounds in the side and in the hand, and his head half crushed by a blow from a mace, scarcely escaped to Montalcino."

So Mr. Heywood tells the tale ("Guide to Siena," pp. 124 *et seq.*).

Note 11, *page* 280

The early condition of the Chiana swamp is brought picturesquely before us in the old custom of Chiusi, whose civic magistrate, with a great number of heralds and trumpeters, was rowed across the swamp to the confines of Montepulciano, and in solemn ceremony, in sign of possession, flung a ring into the waters—*desponsare clanas*—precisely as the Doge of Venice did in the Festa of the Bucintoro. See F. Petrucci, "I confini Senesi di Val di Chiani" in *Bullettino Senese*, An ii (1895), p. 289, and W. Heywood, "History of Perugia" (Methuen, 1910), p. 224, n. 2, and authorities there cited.

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